Intertextuality, Intermediality and Mediality in Benjamin Britten's Nocturne, Op. 60

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Benjamin Britten ist nicht nur einer der am meisten verehrten Komponisten Großbritanniens, sondern zugleich auch einer der Komponisten, über die äußerst kontrovers diskutiert wird. Kritiker bewerten seine Musik auf sehr unterschiedliche Art und Weise. Einige halten seine Musik für zu altmodisch und zu sehr den Traditionen der Tonalität verbunden, andere bewerten sie als zu modern und schwer zugänglich, an Atonalität grenzend.

Aber wie soll man Brittens Musik betrachten? Setzt sie die Traditionen der romantischen Komponisten des 19. Jahrhunderts fort? Ja, dies ist der Fall, jedoch bringt Britten diese Konventionen an ihre Grenzen. Ist Brittens Musik atonal? Obwohl manche Kritiker der Ansicht sind, dass seine Kompositionen abstrakt sind, bleibt er den etablierten Konventionen der Musik doch treu.

Nicht zu bestreiten ist, dass Brittens gesangliche Kompositionen in ihrer Poesie nur schwer zu übertreffen sind. Er vertonte Gedichte von bedeutenden Dichtern wie Arthur Rimbaud, Victor Hugo, Paul Verlaine, Henry Longfellow, William Shakespare, Edith Sitwell, Emily Brontë und William Blake. Alles in allem vertonte Britten mehr als 300 Gedichte von nicht weniger als neunzig Dichtern.

Die vorliegende Arbeit *Intertextualität, Intermedialität und Medialität in Benjamin Brittens Nocturne, Op. 60* erforscht die textlichen Verhältnisse innerhalb und außerhalb des Stücks, den musikalischen Einfluss auf die Texte und die Kombination von Text und Musik. Die Studie beginnt mit einer chronologischen Darstellung der Entwicklung des Liederzyklus. Ein besonderer Schwerpunkt liegt hier auf dem orchestralen Liederzyklus, um Britten im Kontext des Genres zu etablieren.

Die darauf folgenden Kapitel befassen sich mit dem Konzept der Intertextualität, um den Bezug zwischen Text und Musik der Nocturne erörtern zu können, dem Konzept der Intermedialität, um die Interaktion zwischen Text und Musik zu beschreiben und dem Konzept der Medialität, um zu untersuchen, wie Text und Musik an das Publikum kommuniziert werden können.

Diese Arbeit schließt eine Lücke in der Musik- und Literaturwissenschaft. Dies nicht nur, weil sie eine kritische Analyse des musikalischen Stückes darstellt, sondern auch deshalb, weil sie Wissenschaftlern, Laien und Künstlern Wissen vermittelt, wie das Stück verstanden und aufgeführt werden kann.

Intertextuality, Intermediality and Mediality

in Benjamin Britten's Nocturne, Op. 60

Benjamin Britten, considered to be one of Britain's most revered composers, is simultaneously one of its most controversial. This dichotomy exists because critics are at odds when describing or discussing his music is. Many believe his music is much too rooted in the traditional conventions of tonality and not modern enough or forward looking for his time; yet, there are others who believe his music to be too modern, too difficult to access, and bordering on atonality.

How should Britten's music be considered then? Does it continue in the traditions and conventions of the 19th century Romantic composers? Yes it does, but at the same time, Britten takes these conventions and stretches them to their limits. Is his music atonal? While it may sound atonal to some, his dissonances always have a tonal center. Are Britten's musical forms abstract? While the musical forms he uses may sound abstract, new, and distorted to some, they are forms that are actually well-established and conventional.

What one cannot dispute, however, is that Britten's vocal output utilizes some of the best poetry ever written. Among the poets, whose works he set to music are Arthur Rimbaud, Victor Hugo, Paul Verlaine, Henry Longfellow, William Shakespeare, Edith Sitwell, Emily Brontë, and William Blake. All in all, Britten set over 300 different poems from no less than 90 different poets to music.

This work, *Intertextuality, Intermediality and Mediality in Benjamin Britten's Nocturne, Op. 60* explores textual relationships both within and outside the piece, the musical impact on the texts, and the combination of text and music. The study begins by chronolizing the development of the song cycle with special emphasis on the orchestral song cycle as an

attempt to place Britten in the genre. Subsequent chapters focus on a wide notion of intertextuality to discuss the text and music of *Nocturne*, notions of intermediality to discuss the interaction of music and text in the piece, and notions of mediality to discuss how its text and music can be communicated to an audience. The work fills a gap by not only providing critical analyses about this piece of music and its texts, but also how, through intertextual, intermedial and medial examinations, scholars, lay persons, and performers can gain invaluable knowledge that can aid in how the piece is understood and performed.

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1. Introduction

Benjamin Britten, considered to be one of Britain's most revered composers, is at the same time considered to be one of its most controversial. This dichotomy exists because many critics believe his music is much too rooted in the traditional conventions of tonality and not modern enough[1] or forward looking for his time[2]. Then there are those critics who believe his music to be too modern, too difficult to access, and bordering on atonality[3]. Some, like Theodor Adorno, say that Britten had little to no compositional talent[4], while "many consider him among the five great stylists of modern British music" (Schwartz par. 1). Of course, within these poles lies the truth.

Except for being a composer who possesses no compositional talent, I believe that Britten is all of the above. Does his music continue in the traditions and conventions of the 19th century Romantic composers? Yes it does, but at the same time, Britten takes these conventions and stretches them to their limits. Is his music atonal? While it may sound atonal to some, his dissonances always have a tonal center. Are Britten's musical forms abstract? While the musical forms he uses may sound abstract, new, and distorted to some, they are forms that are actually well-established and conventional, albeit somewhat modernized.

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[1] Theodor Adorno said of Britten's compositions that they were "musical cocktails" made from "insipid mixture of elements from a dead tradition and a few unimportant modern ingredients" (qtd. in Hewitt, par. 3).

[2] Mervyn Cooke reports in the introduction of *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten* (a collection of essays on Britten that he edited) that many people took issue with Britten's music including composers such as Vaughan Williams, who referred to Britten's music as "very clever but beastly" and critics such as Ernest Newman, who was "painfully disappointed" with Britten's *Billy Budd* (2).

[3] Anne Midgette, a writer for *The Washington Post*, says that "[h]is music is too conservative for new-music aficionados but on the wrong side of the dateline for anyone afraid to test the waters of the 20th century" (n. pag.), and Frank Howes, a British music critic for the *Times*, said "Mr Britten is still pursuing his old problem of seeing how much indigestible material he can dissolve in his music" (qtd. in Bridcut 17).

[4] "Across every frontier, the epigones – themselves sworn enemies of the epigonous - resemble each other in their weak concoctions of adeptness and helplessness. Dmitry Shostakovich – unjustly reprimanded as a cultural Bolshevik by the public authorities of his homeland – the lively pupils of Stravinsky's pedagogical ambassadors, the pretentious meagerness of Benjamin Britten: All of these have in common a taste for bad taste, a simplicity founded in ignorance, immaturity that fancies itself clear minded and a lack of technical capacity." (Adorno 10)

What one cannot dispute, however, is that Britten's vocal output utilizes some of the best poetry ever written. Among the poets whose works he set to music are Arthur Rimbaud, Victor Hugo, Paul Verlaine, Friedrich Hölderlin, Henry Longfellow, Robert Southwell, William Shakespeare, Thomas Weelkes, Edith Sitwell, Emily Brontë, William Blake, Wilfred Owen, and Robert Burns. All in all, Britten set over 300 different poems from no less than 90 different poets to music (cf. Ford xii). Britten's knowledge and love for poetry was influenced and nurtured by his close friend, Wystan Hugh Auden[5], himself a poet, whose poems Britten also used for a number of his songs.

Britten chose his poetical texts with care, and believed that it was the composer's duty to enhance a text and to translate it into musical terms. It was his wish to "try and restore the musical setting of the English language as a brilliance, freedom, and vitality that [had] been curiously rare since the days of Purcell" (Britten qtd. in Ford xi). Britten was very critical of British composers and believed their compositions to be rather elementary, lacking in creativity, and simply bad.[6] In Britten's mind, no English composer since Purcell had the skill or the creativity to write good songs, and he felt it was his duty to solve that problem, so while referring to the old, he created something new. Peter Porter says in his essay "Composer and Poet" that

> [t]he whole corpus of Britten's work is informed by a deeply poetical feeling. Vocal compositions predominate in his output, but his is not the whole or even the main part of the case. Instead, it can be said that what poets have prefigured in words, he has reworked in music. This recognition of the fact that even a superb piece of poetry leaves something more to be said is what makes so many of his settings so masterful. (qtd. in Ford xviii)

Denis Stevens claims that there are three distinct characteristics by which Britten enriched song:

> First, by an enlargement of harmonic resource, particularly by a simultaneous combination of tonic and dominant harmony; second, by the florid expansive, 'Purcellian' treatment of melody, especially the extension of a single syllable (not necessarily in an emotional word) over a long run of notes; third, by

[5] Britten's relationship to Auden will be discussed in detail later in the study.

[6] Britten said of Elgar and Williams: "I am absolutely incapable of enjoying Elgar for more than two minutes; Certainly the best way to make me like Elgar is to listen to him after Vaughan Williams" (qtd. in Bridcut 32).

> the building of accomplishments not through the extension of chords into continuous flowing lines, but through the use of short melodic motives often contrapuntally used and having both thematic and expressive value. (175 – 176)

While Stevens makes it clear that Britten had a profound influence on the development of the song, he also makes it clear that Britten was clearly connected to the past. Thus, Stevens confirms my earlier claim that Britten has one foot in the past and the other foot in the present, but with both feet moving toward the future.

Yet the question remains: Is Britten one of the greatest British composers of the 20th century, or not? In my opinion, he is, and I hope that by the end of this work, if you do not already agree with me, you will. However, in order to find out exactly where Britten's musical output belongs, we must look at his vocal compositions (his song cycles in particular) in relation to those composers and those works that most likely influenced him, and then determine how his compositions fit into this developmental timeline.

For this work, I have chosen to concentrate on Britten's song cycle *Nocturne*, Op. 60, for two reasons: it is not widely known, and, to my knowledge, it has been the primary focus of only a handful of scholarly works to date. My main goal in writing this work is to show how *Nocturne* can be considered to be intertextual, intermedial, and medial, and what implications these conclusions have on the cycle's texts and music, as well as on the performers and listeners of the piece. My second goal is to clearly show how significant this piece is not only to Britten's oeuvre, but also how important it is to the development of the song cycle genre.

To that end, my main arguments in this study are three-fold: 1) that Benjamin Britten, in his song cycle, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, brings together a number of poems that, at first glance appear to be vastly different, but that actually have common themes not evident on the surface; 2) that the music set to these poems may change the way they are perceived and understood by the reader / listener; and 3) that different performances can also influence how

the listener interprets, or rather understands both the music and the text. It is my hope that after my arguments have been examined, one will share my conclusion that the combination of these specific texts, arranged in this particular order produce a narrative that is new, fresh and that does not exist anywhere else.

I will also demonstrate that textual and musical analyses and interpretation are subjective because no two people (readers / listeners) are the same, and the experiences and knowledge people activate when they encounter text and music are often vastly different. These experiences, this knowledge, whether cultural, generational, educational or something else, help people determine how to interpret text and music. The concepts of intertextuality and intermediality are often used to help people gain an understanding of how they can relate to a text, how texts relate to other texts, and how different media, such as music and text relate to each other. Using these concepts, this study will examine and employ different theories of how people use the information they possess to interpret texts and music.

Since there are a number of intertextual and intermedial theories, it would be impossible and rather confusing to use them all. A number of those theories will be examined here and those few that have most relevance to this study will be used. To begin my foray into this topic, I would like to discuss the development of the song cycle genre, with particular emphasis on the orchestral song cycle after it comes into existence, and then continue with a chapter on Britten's interest and compositional development in this genre. Doing this will allow me to put *Nocturne* into both a historical, and a compositional context.

2. From Beethoven to Schoenberg

When one thinks of a song cycle, one usually thinks of a group of songs, which are musically linked together, and that share a common theme or topic. One of the earliest definitions of the term 'song cycle' was coined by a German music historian, Arrey von Dommer (1828 – 1905). According to Dommer, a song cycle (Liederzyklus) is

> a coherent complex of various lyric poems. Each is closed in itself, and can be outwardly distinguished from the others in terms of prosody, but all have an inner relationship to one another, because one and the same basic idea runs through all of them. The individual poems represent different expressions of this idea, depicting it in manifold and often contrasting images and from various perspectives, so that the basic feeling is presented comprehensively. (qtd. in Turnbridge 6)

Musicologists agree that when Arrey made this statement, he must have been referring to Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98, and it is with this work that I begin my discussion of the development of the song cycle.

An die ferne Geliebte, *Op. 98*

The reason for saying that Beethoven composed the world's first true song cycle is because *An die ferne Geliebte* is a collection of songs based on the same thematic subject. In addition, they have a clearly defined musical structure, and the music is more than just an accompaniment for the text. In other words, the music and the text become interdependent. As Ruth Bingham states in her essay "The Early Nineteenth-Century Song Cycle", there were a number of song cycles composed before *An die ferne Geliebte*, but Beethoven's cycle, was the first musically constructed song cycle, meaning that "musical coherence relied on techniques associated with instrumental and dramatic genres. Not surprisingly, musicians and

musicologists alike celebrated the cycle's emancipation from textual mimesis, a subservient role that had shackled music's Romantic freedom" (Bingham 115).

Beethoven's world was a time of upheaval and rapid change. The French King, Louis XVI, had been deposed and, together, with his wife, Marie Antoinette, executed. The common man had begun to show the European aristocracy that he could no longer be neglected or mistreated. The ideals of the French Revolution, *liberté, egalité, fraternité,* were taken up by writers all over Europe, first by British poets, then poets in France and Italy, and then the rest of the continent. Not only did these poets give the common man a voice through which he finally was able to express himself openly and freely, but they also gave him the opportunity to hope and to dream. Thus, one could say that the French Revolution ushered in the beginning of the Romantic era.

The early Romantic writers and poets concentrated on the ideals of the French Revolution by rebelling against rational, objective thought, and embracing emotions and intuition instead. Likewise, composers rebelling against the values of Classicism, such as balance and grace, and began to become more expressive, stressing conflict, drama, and emotions. In other words, the Romantics believed in communicating intense feelings, not just something that was nice to listen to. While these feelings could express love, they often expressed anger, hate, abandonment and longing. One common theme of Romanticism is man's symbiotic relationship with nature, while other themes dealt with the supernatural and death. Many composers used historical subjects as inspiration, as well as distant, exotic lands, and nationalistic subjects, such as folk song and dance in their music.

However, when it comes to song, regardless of which era it is composed in, the text always comes first, and *An die ferne Geliebte* is no different. Beethoven chose to set to music six poems by Alois Isidor Jeitteles, an Austrian physician, writer, and journalist. Bingham says that while Jeitteles' "poetry is … not stellar, … it does reveal a structure quite remarkable for its time and is one of the earliest examples of a psychological cycle: the

protagonist does not embark on the typical *Wandering* – only his fantasy wanders" (116). Because the texts are not able to stand well on their own as individual poems, in order for them to be understood, they must be read / heard as a unit.

The texts describe the feelings of longing and separation from the beloved who is far away (poem 1); after mentioning the mountains, valleys, and woods to highlight the distance that separates them (poem 2), the lover first tells the cloud, the birds, the wind, and the brook to deliver his image and his tears to his beloved (poem 3), and then he bids the various elements of nature to carry him to her, so that he may caress her (poem 4); the month of May comes to unite lovers everywhere, but when the lover sees a swallow building its nest, he realizes that only he is denied such happiness (poem 5); finally, the lover sends his beloved these songs for her to sing ("Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder"; "Take them then, these songs"), which is his method of conquering the time and distance that separates them (poem 6).

This Romantic idea of longing and separation gives Beethoven a poetic idea which he can musically work out. That is what is novel about this particular piece, not the fact that Beethoven employs the technique of text painting (creating images through music, such as the birds that one can hear in the fourth and fifth songs), which, nonetheless, is important. Charles Rosen, in *The Romantic Generation*, purports that "Beethoven is the first composer to represent the complex process of memory – not merely the sense of loss and regret that accompanies visions of the past but the physical experience of calling up the past within the present" (166). As mentioned before, the first poem creates the feeling of separation. Beethoven strengthens this idea with the strophic repetition of the melody. The second poem, according to Rosen, is where the process of remembering begins. In the corresponding song, this process is augmented by musical echoes and horn calls which recall the memories, and which, in the second stanza, begin to flow. Through these echoes and calls, the past becomes half present, musically as well as poetically (cf. 168). As Rosen points out, this stanza is

unique to the entire cycle because it is the only stanza where the melody shifts from the voice to the piano. This technique creates a feeling of distance between the lover and his beloved; both, in fact, have the same melody, but are unable to enjoy it together.

Like the second song, the third, fourth, and fifth songs focus on elements of nature, such as birds, mountains, trees, and brooks, which bring forth interminable reflections on the nature of the lover's beloved. In all these songs, which are also all strophic, the melody stays in the voice. There are, however, differences in that some of the strophes are in a major mode, others in a minor mode, or an end phrase may be repeated creating an echo of the past.

It is interesting to note that the first and the last songs form tonal bookends for the psychological wandering of the four inner songs. When looked at tonally, the cycle is built on the following tonal pattern: Eb – G – Ab – Ab – C – Eb. This scheme shows that Beethoven planned a coherent, poetic cycle, which encompasses a rounded form and logical progressions. Eb to G is a relationship of a minor third. The Ab is a half-step away from G, and is a perfect 4^{th} from Eb. The key of Ab is maintained for the fourth song, thus creating a clear middle point in the cycle where the lover is probably most desperate and asks nature to intercede on his behalf. The fifth song, in C, is a minor third above Ab. From C, the tonality moves up again a minor third to return to the opening key of Eb. As a result, all the keys used in the song cycle have a strong relationship to Eb, the tonal center of the work. There is also no break between the songs, meaning that one song continues into the next without cadential finality until the last song.

One technique Beethoven uses that will become standard in the song cycles of composers after him is to give the piano a role equal to that of the voice. As the cycle progresses "the piano almost imperceptibly assumes more and more importance as the piece proceeds" (Kerman 201). Even though each song is strophic, Beethoven constantly varies the piano accompaniment which gives each strophe a unique character.

> … in the third movement as the lyrics speak of "light clouds" and a "little brook," the voice is accompanied by a triplet figure in the piano, while the same melody is accompanied by duplet figures when the text turns to sorrow and walking sadly through the woodlands. The different emotions in these stanzas of the third song are also varied through Beethoven's use of the parallel minor in the third, fourth, and fifth stanzas of this song. (Howell, "Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*" 4 – 5)

Another characteristic of the cohesiveness of the song cycle is that the last song resurrects some compositional elements that appear in the first song. Rosen makes the observation that the final song is a triumph over the declaration found in the last stanza of the first song ("Denn vor Liebesklang entweichet / Jeder Raum und jede Zeit"; "Then before the sound of love retreats / From every space and time"). The last song is not a compositional repetition of the first, but it is instead, a "distorted memory of the past" (Rosen 170). What he is claiming here, is that the first song gradually makes its presence known in the last. The protagonist finally realizes (in the last song) that he will never be able to see his beloved again. As a result, that distance which existed in the first song, he psychologically wills to be smaller. In this way, he has triumphed over the distance *and* the separation between himself and his beloved.

With *An die ferne Geliebte*, Beethoven created a form that would change the way composers approached songs, the way performers interpreted them, and the way people experienced them. To end this discussion on Beethoven and *An die ferne Geliebte*, I will use a quote from Bingham as she literally nails his significance to the genre on the head.

> … Beethoven's impact on the song cycle was to channel the emerging genre toward a coherence that relied more heavily on instrumental, as opposed to verbal, constructs. As a result, musical coherence began to take precedence over textual [coherence] and Beethoven's stature lent the cycle validity as a serious musical genre … In the history of song cycles, Beethoven and his cycle serve as a pivot between an earlier aesthetic, in which poetic coherence dominated and music's job was to convey the text as faithfully as possible, and a later, still current, aesthetic, in which the ideal was a perfect union but in which musical coherence dominated, at least in analysis if not always in fact. (117)

As I continue with the development of the song cycle, Bingham's claim will become much more relevant. The role of the music in song cycles will continue to increase – not to the detriment of the text, but as a complement to it. In other words, text and music become equal

interdependent partners in the song cycle in the truest sense – in other words, one cannot exist without the other.

The Musical Monologue

In the song cycles I am examining in this work, the poetry resembles what the *Encyclopædia Britannica* refers to as an interior monologue. An interior monologue

> in dramatic and nondramatic fiction, [is a] narrative technique that exhibits the thoughts passing through the minds of the protagonists. These ideas may be either loosely related impressions approaching free association or more rationally structured sequences of thought and emotion.
>
> Interior monologues encompass several forms, including dramatized inner conflicts, self-analysis, imagined dialogue …, and rationalization. It may be a direct first-person expression apparently devoid of the author's selection and control, … or a third-person treatment that begins with a phrase such as "he thought" or "his thoughts turned to". ("Interior Monologue")

In the majority of song cycles, the texts are basically a collection of poems, which together, clearly reflect only the thoughts of the protagonist, in essence, a monologue. Furthermore, in such song cycles these thoughts can be loosely related, or they can be rationally structured sequences of thought and emotion. More often than not, they are of the latter type, are usually linear, and quite often imply a story. The protagonist almost always states his feelings[7] or observations about nature and / or his loved one. In addition, he, more often than not, rhetorically addresses nature and entreats it to do his bidding, blames it for his misfortunes, or both. In addition, the monologues usually reveal the protagonist's psychological state of mind, which composers try to reflect through music. This is where the musical monologue ensues.

Beethoven started a trend that continues to this day where composers augment with music what they believe is the inherent psychological state of the protagonist that is expressed in the text. As we saw in *An die ferne Geliebte*, Beethoven reflects the thoughts, feelings and

[7] I intentionally refer to the protagonist as male, as most of the poetry discussed in this study is seen from a male perspective.

surroundings of the protagonist in the music. To do this, he elevated the piano so that its role became more than just that of accompanying. He uses the piano to capture not only the mood of the protagonist, but also to create images indicated by the text. By means of a musical monologue, the text takes on an added dimension because the voice is able to do through music what it cannot through speech alone. This is not to say that spoken text is mono-dimensional. Quite the contrary – emotions and feelings can be expressed in spoken speech, but with the addition of music, the words take on a power that they without it, do not have[8]. According to James Parsons in his essay "Introduction: Why the Lied?", song relies on the bond between poetry and music, and that bond results in a power that exceeds what words and music can do on their own (cf. 8). However, Parsons goes on to say, this power to transcend both genres happens best when the music and the text are on equal footing, a belief that I fully share. However, it is clear that music and the voice in the Beethoven piece are not on equal footing. As in songs composed before it, the voice in *An die ferne Geliebte,* except for a few brief sections, has the dominant role in the piece. Nonetheless, this compositional technique where the piano breaks free from its sole role as an accompaniment figure, albeit briefly, was novel for the time, but it would be taken up and developed further by later composers.

Winterreise, *Op.89*

Even though Beethoven is credited with creating the Romantic song cycle, it is Schubert who, with *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise,* is credited with establishing the genre. While *Die schöne Müllerin is* important to the development of the song cycle, I will concentrate only on *Winterreise* for it is this cycle, composed at the end of Schubert's life, which "captured the creative imagination of [later] song-cycle composers" (Turnbridge 35).

[8] This will become more apparent in the chapter in which I discuss intermediality.

Winterreise (*Winter's Journey*) had a difficult birth. The poetry, written by the German poet Wilhelm Müller, was published in stages. The first 12 poems appeared under the title *Die Winterreise* in the periodical, *Urania*, published by Brockhaus in Leipzig in 1823. Later that same year, 10 more poems were published by Graß, Barth and Company in Breslau. The last two poems, "Die Post" ("The Mail) and "Täuschung" ("Delusion") appeared in Müller's collection of poems entitled *Sieben und siebzig Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten*[9] published by Ackermann in Dessau in 1824. When Schubert set the first 12 poems in 1827, he had no knowledge of the other 12. Therefore, he set the first 12 as a complete cycle with a rounded form (like Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*). Rosen states that the cycle, as it appeared then, was "tonally closed, beginning and ending in D minor (and songs 2 and 11 were both in the related key of A, making the closure more emphatic: DA – AD)" (198).

Only after Schubert had finished setting the first 12 did he come across the second 12. These, too, he set, but he changed the order of the tenth and eleventh poems "Die Nebensonnen" ("Phantom Suns") and "Mut" ("Courage").

> He conceived the new songs as a second part after the first twelve. Schubert's new arrangement, in fact, reduces the narrative sense of Müller's, who had placed "Die Post" ("The Mail") as the sixth song after "The Lime Tree". "Die Post" opens Schubert's second book, but it would be more reasonable for the poet to hope for a letter (which never comes) from his beloved soon after he has left the city than some time later, after the intervention of several songs which have testified to his hopeless acceptance of isolation. (Rosen 198)

Rosen says that Schubert changed the order to create a more intense lyrical end. Schubert made changes not only to benefit the musical intensity, but also for psychological purposes. One example is that when Schubert set the poems to music, he dropped the definite article "die" indicating that the title no longer referred to a specific journey, but more to one that was universal.

[9] *Seventy-seven Poems from the Posthumous Papers of a Traveling Hornist*.

Unlike *An die ferne Geliebte*, the songs of *Winterreise* are often performed out of context. This is because there is no distinct narrative (in part because Schubert changed the original order of the texts). Rosen points out, however, that "[t]he songs of *Winterreise* are only apparently separate works: even those which are effective outside the cycle lose character and significance when so performed … The Schubert song cycle embodies a paradox: each song is a completely independent form, well rounded and finished, which nevertheless makes imperfect sense on its own" (196). This is why many choose to perform the songs out of context as individual pieces, or in small groups of two or three songs together.

Returning to the origins of the piece, it is important to note that the two halves of *Winterreise* are very different – from the theme of rejection from society, to that of impending death. To highlight this anguish and rejection, the poems refer to the same cold, winter journey, which stands in contrast to the warm, sunny days in May conjured up by the Beethoven piece. However, like the Beethoven piece, the protagonist engages in the act of remembering. He "dreams of past happiness and contrasts it with his present sadness; symbols of previous, sociable life (flourishing nature, the arrival of post, barking dogs) are made distant and, literally, cold …" (Turnbridge 34).

As mentioned above, one can divide *Winterreise* into two distinct halves: poems 1 – 12 and poems 13 – 24. In his essay on *Winterreise*, Cory Howell elaborates on the dichotomy of each half. He mentions that the first half is mainly about the anguish the protagonist experiences when he is rejected by a former love interest (cf. Howell, "Schubert's *Winterreise*" 2). The first song "Gute Nacht" ("Good Night") contains the following words: "The girl spoke of love, her mother even of marriage. Now the world is overcast, my way covered in snow". When the song cycle opens, we find that the protagonist has already started his journey. During the course of the next few songs, we learn that his love interest has betrayed him. Howell goes on to say there is much more than just the images of lost love in

the texts. In the third verse of "Gute Nacht", dogs howl "in front of their master's house". Howell explains this as an "image of torment by animals [that] recurs [repeatedly] throughout the cycle" ("Schubert's *Winterreise*" 3). Examples of such torrents can be found in "Rückblick" ("Backward Glance") where crows fling snow and hail onto the protagonist's hat, and in "Frühlingstraum" ("Dream of Spring") where ravens croak on a roof and cocks crow at the protagonist's heart. This persiflage continues in "Die Krähe" ("The Crow") when a crow flies over his head, and in "Im Dorfe" ("In the Village") where watchdogs bark incessantly, making it impossible for the protagonist to sleep. Finally, in "Der Leiermann" ("The Organ-Grinder"), dogs snarl at the old organ-grinder. According to Howell, "the protagonist is not only an outcast from human society, but he is also a vagabond scorned by wild beasts" ("Schubert's *Winterreise*" 3). Howell makes an important observation here. He points out that the animal world has turned on the wanderer and relentlessly pursues him. This, combined with the cold, savage winter, the frozen river, the protagonist's frost-sprinkled hair, cold winds, tattered clouds, moon-cast shadows, withered flowers, and pale grass, creates an image of despair, abandonment, and impending doom. That being said, one can see that Müller's texts are laden with Romantic images – nature, unrequited love, full of emotion – and they end with the protagonist's death.

What Schubert does with Müller's text is innovative and revolutionary. I have already mentioned that the cycle was composed in two halves, with the first half initially as a complete cycle within itself. Once Schubert discovered the second 12 poems, Schubert scholar Susan Youens says that "he could not duplicate Müller's final ordering without disrupting the musical structure he had already created" (28). Since the publication of the cycle was in process when he discovered the remaining 12 poems, he simply set the newly-discovered poems in order beginning with "Die Post"[10]. Thus, the first half was published in

[10] The exception being the reversed order of "Mut" and "Die Nebensonne".

January 1828 and eleven months later in December of the same year, the second half was published.

It is interesting to note that Schubert died on November 19, 1828, one month before the second half was published. Many people[11] have said that the dark mood and the somberness of the piece may reflect the composer's mental state, since he realized that his life was coming to a swift end[12]. Even though he was very sick at the beginning of 1828, he continued working on the cycle until it was finished.

In *Winterreise,* the piano takes on even more importance than it does in *An die ferne Geliebte*. The relationship between the voice and the piano becomes one of interdependency. Beethoven raises the importance of the piano in *An die ferne Geliebte*, but he does so with reserve and not in every song of the cycle. In contrast, the piano in *Winterreise* is more than an accompaniment – it is an equal partner, expressing and setting the mood of the cycle.

> Musical images of walking dominate the first half of the cycle: songs 1, 3, 7, 10, and 12 all have the easygoing rhythm of a walk through the countryside … Over this movement of walking Schubert imposes the musical images of landscapes – in the seventh song, for example, the ice of the frozen stream, under which passion still flows … The last two of these walking songs, numbers 10 and 12, have a more tired, even exhausted pace. (Rosen 197 – 199)

The walking rhythms continue in the second half of the cycle, but the mood is much darker and sinister. In the first half, the protagonist had been rebuffed only by his beloved. In the second half, however, the protagonist is rebuffed by society. This is important because these images of walking reveal that the protagonist has decided to deal with his pain by leaving the comforts of his home and going out into the cold, harsh world.

From what Rosen states, one must agree that the piano takes on a role that is more important than the role of the piano in *An die ferne Geliebte*. Youens even goes so far as to say that

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[11] Elizabeth Norman McKay in her book *Schubert: The Piano and Dark Keys*, and Lauri Suurpää in her book *Death in* Winterreise*: Musico-Poetic Associations in Schubert's Song Cycle* for example.

[12] Schubert had contracted syphilis in 1822, a disease to which he succumbed six years later in 1828.

> *Winterreise* is chamber music in which the pianist's part far surpasses the subordinate function implied in the word 'accompaniment'. Ultimately, what is most impressive about the writing for the piano in this cycle is the pianist's role both in the enactment of the poetry and in music's inevitable antagonism to words … because music by its nature alludes to matters indefinable in words, Müller's calculated reticences invite fleshing-out in instrumental terms. Even the onomatopoeic passages for piano, suggestive of rustling linden leaves, barking dogs, post coaches, and storm winds, point beyond verbal images to realms where words cannot go and music can. After all, the cycle ends with the vision of the mute instrumentalist to whom only the most minimal of tones remain, a creature beyond the reach of language. (107 – 108)

What is probably most significant about Youens' quote is that she calls *Winterreise* chamber music. Think about this statement for a moment. When one thinks of chamber music, one generally thinks of a small group of instruments performing some piece of music together. Rarely does vocal-piano music come to mind. One important aspect of chamber music is that all the instruments are on equal standing with each other – none is more or less important than the other instruments in the ensemble. Thus, when Youens assigns the term, chamber music, to *Winterreise*, she confirms what I stated before – that the piano is not just an accompanying instrument, but an equal partner in its own right. Without the harmonic intricacies found in the piano, without the mood-setting motifs, without painting the text, the vocal part would suffer greatly. The two parts are interdependent and work together to create a whole. This characteristic (which today is almost taken for granted), which had its genesis in *An die ferne Geliebte*, and which was developed by Schubert, reached new heights in the cycles of Robert Schumann, and it is now that I turn to his *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48.

Dichterliebe*, Op. 48*

The year 1840 was an exceptional one for Robert Schumann, for it was in this year that he composed over 125 songs, more than half of his total song output. According to Ruth

Bingham, this year also marked a turning point in the history of the song cycle akin to that of *An die ferne Geliebte* (cf. 118).

> Although *An die ferne Geliebte* offered both model and inspiration, the musically constructed cycle began in earnest only with Schumann and his contemporaries, and it is this type of cycle that continues to provide the generic contract today. After Schumann, the song cycle became a recognized genre that followed Romanticism's flow, spreading to other countries, adopting a loftier, more serious approach, and expanding into orchestral song cycles near the end of the century. (119)

Thus, Schumann fundamentally changed the song cycle that Beethoven had created and that Schubert had developed. In many ways *Dichterliebe* has characteristics that can be found in *An die ferne Geliebte* and *Winterreise*: all three cycles deal with unrequited love, the songs in all three cycles are tonally related, and in all three cycles the later songs contain material found in the earlier ones. Unlike its predecessors, however, the relationship between the music and the text in *Dichterliebe* is one of true interdependence. As Aristotle said, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". In order to put this song cycle into its proper perspective, let us take a look at its origins, the poetry it employs, and the music that makes it one of the most beloved song cycles of all time.

Before 1840, Schumann was known primarily for his piano compositions, as he had all but ignored song[13]. In fact, he is quoted as saying that "he always considered music for the human voice inferior to instrumental music and never thought of it as great art" (Schumann 143). So why did Schumann suddenly turn his attention to song? According to Jürgen Thym in his essay "Schumann: Reconfiguring the Lied", the answer can be attributed to the circumstances in which he and his wife, Clara Wieck, found themselves in 1839 – 1840. Schumann und Wieck had fallen in love a few years before and had planned to marry. However, Friedrich Wieck, Clara's father, strictly opposed the marriage. Since Clara was

[13] Dunsby notes that Schumann had composed a few songs in 1827 – 1829, but these are considered to be rather immature and insignificant. Furthermore, his first songs were not published until 1840 (cf. "Why Sing?" 103).

underage[14], she could not marry without her father's permission. After a lengthy legal battle, Robert and Clara were allowed to be married, and on September 12, 1840, the two were legally wed.

Thym claims that "the emotionally charged circumstances may have contributed to Schumann's sudden outburst of creativity, which found an outlet in songs, most of them dealing with love in its many–faceted aspects and covering the entire range of possible emotional response from the agony of rejection to the bliss of fulfillment" (122). During this time, Schumann amassed a large compendium of poetry, much of which he later set to music. His choice of poets included Eichendorff, Rückert, Goethe, Chamisso, Reinick, and Heine, to name a few. But it was 20 of the 65 poems[15] from Heinrich Heine's *Lyrisches Intermezzo* that Schumann chose for *Dichterliebe*. As mentioned earlier, the theme is unrequited love, but what Heine does to express this mood is quite different from poets who preceded him. Rosen states that

> the immediate experience of landscape has almost disappeared. For Heine, the elements of nature – nightingales, roses, lilies – have become a kind of emotional bric-a-brac, and they work simply as part of a psychological system of signs: nightingales are only a symbol of the lover's sorrow; lilies make present the whiteness of the beloved's skin. The banality of his poetic paraphernalia does not disturb Heine – quite the contrary: he uses it expertly to reflect a bitter irony onto a genuine passion, a passion that is forced to use such commonplace modes of expression in order to reveal itself. (204)

Although *Lyrisches Intermezzo* is considered a Romantic work, it contains elements of irony, which is atypical of Romantic poets. This sense of irony is inherent not only to Heine's poetry, but also to the man himself. When the two first met in 1828 in Munich, Schumann said of Heine that "[o]n [Heine's] lips there played a bitterly ironic smile, but it was a lofty smile aimed at the trivialities of life and a scorn for petty men" (qtd. in Hampson, par. 20).

[14] The legal age for women to marry without consent was 22. Nine years her senior, Robert proposed to Clara when she was 18.

[15] Schumann, for some inexplicable reason, reduced the number of songs from 20 to 16 shortly before *Dichterliebe* was published.

According to Hampson[16], in the prologue of *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, a dreamy poet referred to as a knight, is abruptly jolted back from the fairyland of his illusions about life and love into a lonely poet's attic (cf. par. 21). Thus, irony plays an important role in Heine's work, which was, as mentioned earlier, unusual for Romantic poets of his day. Like Rosen, Hampson firmly believes that

> Heine's poetic diction employs practically the entire repertory of Romantic symbols and images to give the poems a metaphorical dimension as well as to inject into them his own brand of irony. The way Schumann captures these dimensions in his songs belies any naïveté on his part or any lack of understanding of the ironic implications … (par. 21)

Schumann had a great understanding of Heine's irony, which we can see in the musical treatment of the texts. Hampson claims that not only must one be familiar with the original 20-song version of *Dichterliebe*, but one must also be familiar with the complete *Lyrisches Intermezzo*. Only then is it possible to understand how the songs and the poems are stylistically connected. He mentions that in the first version of *Dichterliebe*, the clarity of the text is much more pronounced against the melodic line, and the rhythms are closer to speech than in the final version.

> In a song like Nr. 11, *Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen*, the melody indeed, the entire song is clothed in a different ambiance. In the manuscript above the postlude one finds the marking 'vivat hoch' which captures spontaneously and vividly the fluid key structure. The accompaniment in the first version is also often patently unprettified [sic]; many dissonances may jar at first hearing, but they very quickly serve to establish the semantic reference. The phrasing of the piano part is frequently rhythmically differentiated, shifting with the fluctuation of the singing voice, as in Nr. 14, and the postludes are often a few measures longer. Then, too, some themes like that of the [*Die*] *alten bösen Lieder*, which are buried in the last of the Schumann-Heine songs, can be heard much earlier in the original version than they can in the sixteen-song 1844 *Dichterliebe*.
>
> Beyond all of these differences, the manuscript of the 20 songs offers its interpreter a few more opportunities to observe divergent details. Persistently repeated printing errors can be corrected by studying the manuscript. There are also countless tempo and phrase indicators which are lacking in the printed version and which add significantly to the interpretation, just as the vocal tessitura of the original is so fashioned that a baritone, a flexible one, of course can sing the original keys without transposition. One notes this last fact with a caution because today's listener will not hear the high notes customary in the *Dichterliebe*, but rather the lower-lying originals which are found in the manuscript. The 20 *Lieder* make much more use of the lower, rather than upper head register for the singer! (Hampson, par. 4 – 5)

[16] Thomas Hampson, world-renowned for his career as a lyric baritone, is recognized for his research and programs that deal with a wide range of song styles in different languages and musical periods. Through his foundation, the Hampsong Foundation, which he founded in 2003, he uses song to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding. He is regarded as one of the most important interpreters of German Romantic song.

Thus, Hampson makes it clear that knowledge of the poetry and of the earlier 20-song version is essential for one to really understand the song cycle. With that background, let us look a little closer at the poetry and at how Schumann musically expresses its romanticism in *Dichterliebe*. One Romantic element that Hampson alludes to and that Rosen exploits is that of memory. As has been pointed out in *An die ferne Geliebte* and *Winterreise*, memory and recall are key to the protagonist's suffering. In *Dichterliebe*, memory is realized through dreams which recall the protagonist's experiences and his feelings of sorrow and anguish. Rosen points out that the protagonist "weeps when he dreams that his beloved is dead; weeps when he dreams that she has left him; and weeps most bitterly when he dreams she still loves him" (205). If we look at the poetic structure of the piece, we see that the first six songs deal with the protagonist's thoughts of love and bliss (even though he occasionally has doubts if she truly loves him). In songs 7 and 8, the protagonist expresses outrage when he learns that he has been betrayed. In the following six songs, the protagonist expresses his disappointment through memories of bitterness, nostalgia, and self-derision. In the last two songs, the protagonist constructs a utopia where he can finally bury his bitter memories.

Most scholars agree that *Dichterliebe* can be divided into two halves that are defined by thematical content and tonal structure. In the first half the songs advance harmonically by thirds and fifths. The second half, however, is less predictable because the tonal progression is more adventurous, venturing through flat regions, enharmonic relations, finally arriving "at the cathartic conclusion in both C# minor and Db major – two keys standing in a sort of fifth relationship to F# minor, one of two keys implied in the first song" (Thym 133).

It is important to note that the cycle is full of ambiguities and irony. Due to the harmonic structure of the piece, the listener often has no idea where the journey will lead. The first song, for example, is tonally ambiguous. Even though the piano implies the key of F# minor, the tonic chord is never played. The song ends on the dominant seventh chord of F#

minor, meaning that the song in and of itself is incomplete because the tonic has not been confirmed. The confirmation comes, however, in the opening of the second song where it is resolved. Many critics and scholars have come up with reasons for Schumann's handling of the tonal ambiguity, but I think Turnbridge expresses it best when she says that "Schumann might be responding to the poem's final reference to yearning and desire, depicting something that can never be satisfied" (15). Turnbridge also makes an ingenious observation when she says that "it seems as if music and words are telling different stories. The text of 'Im wunderschönen Monat Mai' seems to be saying, 'Ah yes, I remember it well, the first blossoms of young love.' 'But how will it end?' the music enquires" (15 – 16). Thus, it seems as if Schuman is intentionally trying to baffle the listener. One would think that the music reflects the poetry. At least that is how Beethoven and Schubert constructed their song cycles. Schumann, on the other hand, goes beyond what both Beethoven and Schubert did. What Schumann does differently is to use the music to allow the listener to peer into the protagonist's mind and soul. In a sense, then, the listener becomes omniscient. While the protagonist says one thing, the listener, by means of the music, knows that he often means something quite different.

Take for example the fifth song, "Ich will meine Seele tauchen". When one examines the poetry alone, one can clearly identify the eroticism that is evident in it. Schumann, however, subdues this eroticism by composing an almost mechanical piano accompaniment. Only when we get to the postlude does Schumann allow the eroticism to come through, albeit restrained. In the sixth song, "Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome", the piano paints a picture of the majestic Cologne Cathedral. However, when the protagonist spies a painting of the Virgin Mary hanging on one of the cathedral walls, he compares it to his beloved. It is in this instance that the accompaniment becomes dreamy and detached from the majesty which had just been presented. The song ends with the protagonist suddenly remembering where he is and the majestic figure returns, shutting out the impure thoughts the protagonist experienced,

or more likely, should not have experienced. The seventh song, "Ich grolle nicht", is similar in its irony to the fifth song. The title implies that the protagonist is not going to complain, but the accompaniment pounds out the chords in such a pedantic, aggressive, and relentless fashion that it practically screams at the listener.

There are many more examples of such ambiguity, irony, and unsettledness in the cycle. Rosen points out that this work may be "the first piece of music in which empty silence plays a role as great as or even greater than that of the notes" (207). This occurs in song 13, "Ich hab im Traum geweinet", where the protagonist is so overwrought with despair that he cannot finish the song. "He ends on a tonic note, but it is the tonic turned into a dissonance" (207).

While the songs of Schubert's *Winterreise* together created a musical whole, the songs were often taken out of context and performed individually since they contained no distinct narrative. The songs that make up Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, however, must be performed together because musically, one song leads into the next. Bingham mentions that Schumann's concept of a cycle was quite unusual for his day because he employed techniques such as thematic recall, tonal structuring, weak or incomplete closure between songs, melodies derived from basic motives, and delayed resolutions (cf. 118 – 119).

The cycle ends as it begins, open ended. As with Beethoven and Schubert, Schumann uses musical material at the end that had appeared in the earlier songs. In the case of *Dichterliebe*, the material repeated comes from the twelfth song, "Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen". Rosen points out that the repetition is set apart from *An die ferne Geliebte* in that it is not a return to the opening page. Instead, the music that

> returns as a coda was already a postlude to the twelfth song, a new theme not motivically related to the main body of the piece: … Schumann does not allow the singer to finish here, but suspends the vocal line on a half cadence. The piano does not so much continue the song as offer a melody of its own, which is like a meditation or commentary on what had preceded.
>
> At the end of the cycle the vocal line is once again suspended, and the piano returns to its earlier meditation, this time elaborately extending it into an extraordinarily expressive cadence. (Rosen 208 – 209)

Rosen makes the striking observation that the postlude is not a commentary on the last song, but instead on the entire cycle. At the beginning of the piece, the protagonist, experiencing some doubt, was still somewhat hopeful that he and his beloved would be happy together. As mentioned before, this happiness soon turns to anger when he learns he has been betrayed. By the time we get to the end, the protagonist has lost all hope. His only wish is to put his sorrows in a coffin and send them both to a watery grave in the Rhine, but the piano postlude erases this image and recalls the music of "Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen" when all is fine, at peace and tranquil. This is the wish of the protagonist and it is with these thoughts of better days, of May, of birds, of flowers, of love, that his life ends.

15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone, *Op. 33*

Johannes Brahms, while known better for his instrumental compositions, also composed a number of vocal works. *Die Schöne Magelone*, composed between 1861 and 1869 is based on the lyrical poem by Ludwig Tieck entitled *Liebesgeschichte der schönen Magelone und des Grafen Peter von Provence*[17]. *Die Schöne Magelone* stands out in Brahms' vocal output not only because it is one of the few song cycles he composed, but also because it clearly shows the influence of both Schubert and Schumann on his compositional output, thus making it a logical piece to mention in my brief journey through the development of the song cycle from Beethoven to Britten.

According to Denis Stevens in his book *A History of Song*, Brahms' music in general shows only traces of Schumann's influence, but more overtly the influence of Schubert (cf. 250). However, while Stevens claims that Brahms did not have Schumann's literary background, Heather Platt in her essay "The Lieder of Brahms" points to the writings of

[17] *The Romance of Magelone the Fair and Peter Count of Provence*

Gustav Jenner, one of Brahms' students who wrote extensively about how Brahms went about setting text to music. She states that Jenner "emphasizes the necessity of thoroughly knowing the text before beginning to compose a Lied, and he recalls that Brahms specified familiarity with all the intricacies of a poem including being able to recite it correctly" (Platt 185). However, before I delve into the intricacies of the text-music relationship in this particular piece, let us take a look at Tieck's poetry.

Die Liebesgeschichte der schönen Magelone und des Grafen Peter von Provence was written by Tieck in 1796. He based his novella on the 15th-century French romance entitled "Légende de la Belle Magelone", which, in 1527, was translated into German by Veit Warbeck. Tieck adapted the story into an 18-chapter, three-volume work. The poem relates the story of Magelone and Peter, a pair of young lovers who elope, are separated by fate, and subsequently reunited. Eric Sams, in his book *The Songs of Johannes Brahms*, mentions that "the love-story of Peter and Magelone is very much in the Arabian Nights vein of inconsequential events and amazing coincidences …" (90).

Enchanted by her beauty, Peter falls in love with Magelone when he first sees her. He professes his love to her, and she conveys through her nurse that she loves him in return. In total Peter meets with the nurse three times to declare his love and explain that his intentions are honorable. The first two times, he gives the nurse a ring to give to Magelone. After the third meeting, a meeting with Magelone is arranged and Peter gives her a third ring directly. She gives him a gold chain in return and they declare their love to each other, and seal their love with a kiss.

What Magelone does not reveal is that she is engaged to another. Peter decides to test her love and sends her home. She pleads with him to let her stay so they can flee together. They elope and their journey takes them through a forest. Along the way, Peter sings a number of songs reflecting his joy and love. Magelone falls asleep and Peter spies her purse, which he opens and sees the three rings he gave to her. He closes the purse, but as he sets it

down, a raven comes and snatches it, flying off with it over the sea, where the bird drops it. Peter finds a boat and rows out to sea to find the purse. While on his quest, he is swept away by a storm and becomes lost at sea.

Meanwhile, Magelone awakes only to find Peter and her purse gone. She wanders the countryside and comes to the cottage of an old shepherd and his wife, who offer her a place to live. In the meantime, Peter is rescued by a ship manned by moors and he becomes the servant of their sultan. He spends two years among the moors and in that time gains the sultan's favor. Meanwhile, the sultan's daughter has fallen in love with Peter and wants to elope. Believing Magelone to be dead, Peter agrees.

The story switches to Peter's parents who, through what seems to be a miracle, come into the possession of the lost rings which have been given up by the sea. The mother takes this as an omen that her son is still alive. Meanwhile, Peter, after having decided to elope with the sultan's daughter, hears a song which reminds him of his love for Magelone. His faith renewed, Peter takes a boat and rows out to sea. He lands on an island full of flowers and spends some time there before continuing his journey back to his home country. He happens upon the cottage where Magelone has been living, and they gradually come to recognize each other. They profess their love anew and are married.

Like the poetry used by Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann, *Die Liebesgeschichte der schönen Magelone und des Grafen Peter von Provence* contains elements of Romanticism: nature (mountains and meadows, lonely forests) traveling, remembrance, self-reflection, anguish, despair, and hopelessness. However, this work differs from the poetry used by the other composers because even though the protagonist experiences love and anguish through the loss of that love, he is reunited with his beloved and can be happy with her in the end. In addition, Tieck wrote songs for Peter to express his thoughts as commentary on the narrative. As a result, Tieck's work has something that the other poetry used for *An die Ferne Geliebte, Winterreise,* and *Dichterliebe* do not – a narrative.

In most cases "a song cycle cannot tell a story directly – at best it can hint at one that remains untold" (Rosen 175). That is because we usually do not know all of the circumstances surrounding the protagonist. We do not know why the lovers are separated, why they cannot reunite, or why they may be unhappy. This is the case in the first three song cycles I have examined in this work. However, the poetry used for Brahms' cycle is quite different. It does tell a story. We know why the lovers are separated, why they are unhappy, and how they are reunited. In his deliberate selection of 15 of the songs that Tieck had written, Brahms tries to maintain the storyline and created his song cycle *15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone*. Nevertheless, the main problem with the narrative element in this particular song cycle is that the narrative does not exist in the songs. As mentioned before, most of the songs are simply commentaries on the action that has just transpired. One can put the story together with just the songs, but one is not privy to key information that is not mentioned in the songs. Thus, as Rosen says, this, like other song cycles, does not tell a story directly – it merely hints at one. However, Inge Van Rij points out that Brahms had two versions of the text to choose from since Tieck also extracted the poems from the *Liebesgeschichte* and published them as the lyric cycle *Des Jünglings Liebe*. Thus, Tieck demonstrated that the poetry can be appreciated without the narrative (cf. Van Rij 86). She also points out that although Brahms could have used the abridged version, he clearly decided to use the *Liebesgeschichte* instead of *Des Jünglings Liebe*. This can be confirmed through Brahms' use of the poem "Traun! Bogen und Pfeil", which Tieck had omitted from *Des Jünglings Liebe* (cf. Van Rij 87). Today, Brahms' song cycle is almost always performed with a speaker reading Tieck's story, which was not how Brahms had originally envisioned the performance of the piece. However, by doing so, the action is not lost.

Throughout this chapter I have been trying to show the development of the song cycle from its origins. So far I have been able to draw a line from Beethoven through Schubert to Schumann. Although Schumann and Brahms enjoyed a close friendship, and although

Schumann was a mentor to Brahms, Schubert had a greater impact on this particular work than did Schumann, albeit one can also find traces of Schumann in *Die schöne Magelone* as well.

According to Sams, Brahms's original style for the verbal framework of the piece was based on the Schubertian ballad, "which builds a coherent musical structure from successive episodes of poetic action or description" (92). Apart from the overall structure of the song cycle, Schubert's influence can clearly be seen in songs 3, 6, 10, 13, and 15, while Schumann's influence is evident in song 12. In song 3, "Sind es Schmerzen", the major-minor harmonic scheme reminds one of "Letzte Hoffnung" from *Winterreise*. In both instances, "the major-minor harmonies mirror the poetic contrast-in-unity of pleasure and pains … Other echoes of Schubert are also reflected in the text. Thus, the staccato at 'Ach, und fällt die Träne nieder' is reminiscent of 'Letzte Hoffnung' from *Winterreise* … (where the words 'ach, und fällt das Blatt zu Boden' are strikingly similar)" (Sams 98). In the sixth song, "Wie soll ich die Freude", one can hear a series of trills in both hands of the piano accompaniment when the A major chords are sounded. This is a technique that Schubert made use of in his "Abendröte", D690. In the tenth song, "Verzweiflung", Sams mentions that "[t]he piano's echoes of 'Wellen' and later at 'nimmer' and 'Gewittern' are Schubertian …" (112). The Schubertian influences in song 13, "Sulima", can be traced to Schubert's "Romanze des Richard Löwenherz", D907, and to his "Normans Gesang", D846. In the former, a lover returns after being held captive by moors, and the latter is a song about lovers who are separated. "In both those songs Schubert has the same insistent dotted-note hoof-beat rhythm; like Brahms's [sic] lighter flightier version, its impatience is heard from the first bar to the last in a vivid image of swift travel" (Sams 117). The last song in the cycle, "Treue Liebe dauert lange", is, according to Sams, very much in the style of the Schubertian ballad.

As mentioned earlier, Schumann's influence can also be heard in this work. In song 12, "Muss es eine Trennung geben?", there is a recurring cascade of arpeggiated chords,

which Sams says “represents the breeze-blown movement of leaves or petals” (115). This feature Schumann used in “Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen”, coincidentally also the twelfth song of *Dichterliebe*. However, Schumann uses this technique in other songs in *Dichterliebe* as well, such as “Hör ich das Liedchen klingen”, but the arpeggiated chords take on a mood of sadness and pain. One can also hear Schumannesque characteristics in song 5, “So willst du des Armen”. Here, the full, lush chords played in somewhat declamatory fashion reminds one of song 15 from *Dichterliebe*, “Aus alten Märchen”.

With the *15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone* being so deeply influenced by Schubert and to a lesser extent Schumann, one wonders if Brahms is not regurgitating more of the same ideas, or if he is actually developing the genre further. Brahms uses the music of not only Schubert and Schumann, but also of Beethoven to develop his own distinct harmonic style and dramatic expression. One could say that Brahms’ vocal compositions are a synthesis of the three composers: it exhibits the formal symmetry of Beethoven, the sonorous productivity of Schubert, and the rhapsodic wildness of Schumann.

Brahms, himself, thought of his cycle as a “kind of theater” (Kramer qtd. in Turnbridge 29). Turnbridge goes on to say that even though there is some dialogue in the *15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone*, most of the songs are strophic, while others are based on the slow-fast model indicative of arias in Italian opera (cf. 29). As mentioned earlier *15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone* is based on a pre-existing narrative, and Brahms tries to maintain that narrative through compositional techniques: primarily through word painting, thematic repetition, and tonal relationships. Like his predecessors, Brahms uses text painting to represent different facets of nature: rustling leaves, sunshine, flowing rivers, etc. However, it seems to me as if his text painting is more to create mood and to reflect emotion than to reflect nature. Jenner claims that “Brahms was not interested in ‘atmospheric’ accompaniments; rather he used melodic contour to convey the meaning of particularly important phrases or words” (qtd. in Platt 195). For example, in song 2, “Traun! Bogen und

Pfeil", Brahms uses a progression of falling fifths in the left hand to depict "a scornful parody of unmanly weeping" (Sams 96). Sams further states that Brahms creates both drama and melodrama in song 3 where "the falling mezzo-staccato speaks of tear-drops, while the right-hand alternations sing for joy. After two verses to the same music, the masochistic identity of pleasure and pain is made audible by a movement to the minor mode on the same keynote" (98).

Another device Brahms used to create unity is the repetition of musical themes or conventions. One of the most prominent techniques to appear in the cycle is a triadic theme[18]. Van Rij points out that the cycle opens with a descending triadic theme (which is then repeated in the final song) creating a sense of thematic completeness. She goes on to say that many of the songs in Brahms' cycle display this technique, which helps to strengthen the cycle's narrative element (cf. Van Rij 89).

With regard to tonal relationships, the songs of the *15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone* are closely related, the most distant relationship being that of a perfect fourth found between songs 3 and 4, and 10 and 11. Most of the other songs are a major or minor third apart. There are two occurrences of stepwise tonal movement from song 8 to 9, and from song 11 to 12. In addition, the cycle begins and ends in the same key, Eb major. Thus, the tonal scheme shows that Brahms planned the cycle to be a unit and suggests that he gave some thought to the narrative cohesiveness of the musical accompaniment.

If taken alone, the techniques described above most likely do not constitute anything new, for Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann, all employed many of the same techniques in their song cycles. What makes Brahms different is how he used these techniques in this, his only song cycle. Together, these techniques resulted in something that was quite different from his predecessors. It is often said that the *15 Romanzen aus Die Schöne Magelone* breaks

[18] A triadic theme is built on triadic intervals.

ground because it is semi-operatic, having one foot in the Lied tradition and the other in the opera tradition[19]. As Turnbridge aptly states:

> Brahms has never been known as a man of the theatre. Yet, with the Magelone Romanzen, he creates a sense of drama by combining formal elements from opera with those typical of the song cycle … The vocal writing might be more folk-like than virtuostic (or Lied-like rather than operatic), but the relatively large scale of the individual songs gives the whole greater breadth and dramatic reach than if it were a conventional cycle. (29)

The development of the song cycle of course does not end with Brahms. Other composers such as Wagner, Berlioz, and Mahler would take this idea of the operatic cycle and develop it further, thus creating something that comes closer to opera, but still firmly planted in the song cycle genre: the orchestral song cycle.

The Orchestral Song Cycle

By the mid-19th century, the song cycle had become firmly established as a musical genre in Germany and Austria. Although composers in other countries had also dabbled in the genre, it was the French composer, Hector Berlioz, who took the song cycle to new heights. *Les nuits d'été (Summer Nights)*, was originally composed for voice and piano by Berlioz in 1840 – 41. A number of years later, he decided to orchestrate the entire cycle[20], which was subsequently published in 1856 (Turnbridge 64). At about the same time (1857 – 58), Richard Wagner composed the *Wesendonck Lieder*, originally for voice and piano. However, unlike Berlioz, Wagner did not orchestrate the entire song cycle; he actually orchestrated just one of the

[19] Turnbridge says that if this is to be considered "operatic writing, it is of a fairly old-fashioned kind – more Beethovenian than Verdian, let alone Wagnerian" (29).

[20] *Les nuits d'été*, a collection of six songs based on poems by Théophile Gautier, was originally composed for tenor and mezzo-soprano. Berlioz later made arrangements for baritone, contralto, or soprano and piano. The orchestrated version was composed in 1856.

songs, "Träume" ("Dreams")[21]. In 1910, his student, Felix Mottl[22], orchestrated the other four songs.

With these two compositions, the song cycle genre was expanded. The traditional song cycle for solo voice and piano still existed, but the orchestral song cycle brought some diversity to the genre. Turnbridge makes a clever statement when she says that "the orchestral song cycle has dual nationality: the French side coming from Berlioz, the German from Wagner" (65). However, she supports this statement by stating that when the French turned their attention to the German Lied, their focus was on the musical aspects of the genre, rather than its poetic aspects because French composers first transcribed Schubert's accompaniments for the orchestra before they translated the texts (cf. 65).

It is interesting to note that Berlioz made a number of compositional changes when he converted his cycle from its original piano version to its orchestral version. He altered the key progression from A – D – g – F# – D – F, which is rather conventional, to A – B – f – F# – D – F. The original scoring was intended for a mezzo-soprano or tenor voice. However, in the revised version, songs 1, 4, and 6 were intended for a soprano voice, song 2 for a contralto, song 3 for a baritone, and song 5 for a tenor. Not only did Berlioz change the vocal sequencing, but he also changed the orchestrated version, allowing for more text painting by giving certain lines to specific instruments.

> … in the second song "Le Spectre de la rose", about the ghost of a rose sacrificed for a young girl's corsage, reference to the flower's fading fragrance brings about a change in texture. In the piano version there is a change to *pianissimo* tremolando, which builds to full chords in support of the line "J'arrive du paradis" ("I come from paradise"). In the orchestral version, the pianissimo tremolando is given to harp and sul ponticello violins, a much lighter sound, joined by the rest of the orchestra to make paradise seem more luminous. Orchestration can also intensify the songs' sense of drama, because of its greater potential for contrast. At the final lines of "Le Spectre" – which recount the poet's words, "Ci-gît une rose / Qui tous les rois vont jalouser" ("Here lies a rose / That all kings

[21] Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, is a collection of five songs based on the poetry of Mathilde Wesendonck. It is said that as a birthday present for Mathilde Wesendonck (with whom he is reputed to have had an affair), Wagner composed a version of "Träume" for chamber orchestra to be performed under her bedroom window for her 23rd birthday.

[22] According to James L. Zychowicz in his article "The Lieder of Mahler and Richard Strauss", Mottl's orchestrations were so convincing that the public quickly forgot that Wagner had orchestrated only one of the five songs (246).

> will envy") – the accompaniment thins to a single line; a shift more striking when made from full strings, flute and oboe to solo clarinet than on the piano. (Turnbridge 65 – 66)

From Turnbridge's examples, it is clear that the orchestrated version makes possible a more dramatic presentation of the text, thus maintaining and expanding the tradition of text painting and dramatic presentation that began with Beethoven. Denis Stevens comments that "the accompaniments, originally for piano, are perhaps more effective in their orchestral version, for Berlioz was never happy when writing for the piano" (202).

Because it is important to take into account the German part of the nascent orchestral song cycle, I now turn my attention from Berlioz to Wagner. During the May Uprising in Dresden in 1849, Richard Wagner left Saxony and fled to Zurich, where he was taken in by Otto Wesendonck and where he subsequently met Mathilde, Wesendonck's wife. The two, Mathilde and Richard, struck up a friendship and soon became enamored with each other. Whether or not their mutual attraction led to an affair, one can only speculate. Nonetheless, it was during this time that Wagner had begun working on the poem "Tristan", which was later to be included in his opera, *Tristan and Isolde*. At the end of every evening, he would have Mathilde read to him his work as it progressed. "This intense inter-action with the poet-composer inspired Mathilde to compose five passionate poems of her own, which Wagner set for voice and piano, during the winter of 1857 as he worked on the first act of *Tristan*. Mathilde later wrote in her memoirs that he took each of her poems upon their completion and gave to them a 'supreme transfiguration and consecration' with his music" ("About the Piece", par. 5).

All of the songs in *Wesendonck Lieder* are closely associated to the opera *Tristan and Isolde*, since Wagner was also working on it when he composed the *Wesendonck Lieder*, however, Wagner, himself, said that two of the songs, "Träume" and "Im Treibhaus", were designated studies for the opera (cf. Kimball 101). Nonetheless, it was only "Träume" that Wagner orchestrated. One must wonder why he never orchestrated the remaining four songs,

but this one gives us valuable insight as to his compositional scheme for his opera, *Tristan*, which Mottl used as a template, in addition to his knowledge of Wagnerian operas and his direct association with the composer, to orchestrate the remaining songs of the cycle[23].

Returning to "Träume", its theme is sung in the opera by Isolde's servant at the beginning of Act II, which sets up the duet "O sink hernieder, Nacht der Liebe" ("Descend, Night of Love"). Wagner chose the key of Ab for both the song and the duet. In addition, the instrumentation is similar in both "with strings providing chordal accompaniment and clarinet, bassoon and horns playing a 'sighing' motive, attached in the song to the word 'Träume' ('Dreams')" (Turnbridge 66 – 67).

By orchestrating "Träume", Wagner took the Lied and adapted it for the concert stage. The subsequent orchestrations by Mottl, apparently with the blessings of Wagner, himself, and which closely resemble Wagner's operas, were another expansion of the song cycle genre. However, it is Gustav Mahler who is credited as composing the first true orchestral song cycle, although when they were orchestrated is the subject of much debate.

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen

The song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (*Songs of a Wayfarer*) Mahler composed when he was a young man in his early twenties living in Kassel. He had intended for the cycle to consist of six songs, but the finished work contained only four. Mahler had originally

[23] "Indeed it is important to remember that not only was Mottl a leading Wagnerian conductor and editor, but also that his arrangement was personally approved by Wagner. It is likely that Wagner's approval was for Mottl's intention to orchestrate the songs, since the arrangements were only composed much later, during the summer of 1893 in Hietzing bei Wien. The scores were completed on 3 August, 1893, according to the manuscripts, which have recently become available in the Mottle Nachlass in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich …" (Miller 172 – 173).

composed the cycle for voice and piano accompaniment[24], a version he worked on from 1883 – 1885. He drafted a version of the cycle for solo voice and orchestra around 1891 – 1893 and revised it for a Berlin concert in March 1896. While the original version still exists, it is the symphonic version that is credited with being the first truly orchestrated song cycle.

Before I discuss the music, I would again like to focus on the text of the cycle, for, as I have previously demonstrated, the music always stems from the text. *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* continues the thematic tradition found in the cycles of Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann – that of wandering, unrequited love, and nature – clearly romantic themes.

The texts of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, which were influenced by *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*[25], were written by Mahler himself. The first poem is virtually a paraphrase of the *Wunderhorn* poem "Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht" ("On My Sweetheart's Wedding Day"). According to Richard Wigmore, the cycle is often referred to as Mahler's "Frühlingsreise" ("Spring Journey") and is often considered the counterpart to Schubert's *Winterreise*. As in Schubert's cycle, a spurned lover embarks on his aimless journey, haunted by memories of his affair with his beloved and her blue eyes (Wigmore, par. 9).

In the first song, "Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht", we find the protagonist thinking about his beloved, who is about to marry another. As a result, he embarks on a journey and for a brief moment, he is happy and notices the wonders of nature. However, once he starts to think of his beloved, his thoughts, in turn, take on a sense of sadness and despair. In the second song, "Ging heut Morgen übers Feld" ("I Walked Across the Fields this Morning"), the journey continues and the protagonist is greeted by nature: the grass, birds,

[24]While it is totally possible, I have not been able to find any records of the piano version ever having been performed. Furthermore, the music critic Steven Coburn states on the website *AllMusic.com* that "[u]nlike its two predecessors, Berlioz's *Nuits d'été* (Summer Nights) and Wagner's *Wesendonck-Lieder* (Wesendonck Songs), Mahler's cycle was intended from the beginning as orchestral[, d]espite the fact that it was first sketched with piano and published this way as an alternative …".

[25] *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* consists of anonymous poetry collected by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, which, when published between 1805 and 1808, appeared in three volumes.

and flowers, which point out to him the beauty of the day and the world around them. Unfortunately, the protagonist, however, cannot be consoled, and instead, sees only gloom. The third song, "Ich hab' ein glühend Messer" ("I Have a Hot Knife"), is when his hopelessness overcomes him and we find him with a knife cutting into his chest (the knife being a metaphor for the pain he must endure when he realizes his beloved is lost to him). Everywhere he looks, he is reminded of his beloved. He even dreams about her and hopes never to wake so that the dream can continue. However, his wandering continues and when we arrive at the fourth and final song, "Zwei blaue Augen" ("Two Blue Eyes"), we find the protagonist at a linden tree where, even though haunted by his beloved's blue eyes, he is able to find peace and fall asleep. This is reminiscent of the end of *Dichterliebe* where the protagonist finds peace at the end of the cycle through death. Instead of a watery grave, however, Brahms uses sleep as a symbol of death, through which the protagonist's finds peace.

Many believe that the song cycle is somewhat autobiographical because at the time Brahms wrote the poems, he was in love with Johanna Richter[26] and "Two Blue Eyes" may be referencing her. According to James L. Zychowicz, in his article "The Lieder of Mahler and Richard Strauss", this song cycle presents "a state of affairs that, like so much in Mahler, reflects aspects of his own life. On another level, the implicit narrative shows another influence, one that stretches back more than half a century to Schubert and his *Winterreise*" (254). Thus, like Hampson, Zychowicz believes this work is clearly connected to Schubert and to Romanticism.

To comment on the music, Hampson states that Mahler emphasizes the notion of the *Gesellen* songs as a continuous journey by ending each song in a key different from the one in which it began.

[26] Born in 1858 in Danzig, Johanna Richter was a soprano who was under contract at the Court Theater in Kassel from 1883 – 1886. It is well known that Mahler and Richter had a brief, but unfulfilling love affair.

The first song, in ABA´ Form, and which begins in b, contrasts the protagonist's grief on his sweetheart's wedding day with his initial delight in the natural world (signified by a harmonic shift to Bb). However, as mentioned above, this feeling is short-lived and his thoughts return to his beloved. Here Mahler returns to the original material, however now in a new, remote key (e).

The second song is a perhaps the happiest in the entire cycle, for here the protagonist again, wonders at the beauty found in nature. To underscore this sense of happiness, Mahler sends the protagonist off walking in the happy key of D, which encompasses the first two strophes of the song. As the protagonist basks in the sunshine, Mahler turns to the key of F#, which heightens the euphoria of nature the protagonist experiences. Nonetheless, this feeling is not to last. Although the key remains in F#, the protagonist begins walking much slower as he is reminded of his beloved. He believes that he will never be happy.

With regard to the third song, Wigmore states that "[i]f the first two songs are essentially diatonic and folk-inspired, the third foreshadows the expressionist violence and mordant irony of later Mahler" (par. 11). Musically, this song is extremely complex, set in 9/8 time, and, consists of two asymmetrical parts of 32 and 48 measures. The first part of the song, set in the key of b, is intense and driving, reflecting the state of hopelessness and despair in which the protagonist finds himself. In the second part of the song, which modulates to eb, we become witness to the fomenting obsession the protagonist has for his beloved.

The final song begins in b and opens as a desolate funeral march (a genre in which Mahler would later excel). However, the song warms into the key of E as the protagonist – unlike Schubert's – finds everlasting rest beneath the linden tree. Then, with a last gentle twist of the knife, major sours to e in the piano postlude.

It is interesting to note that Mahler transposed the second and third songs while he was working on the orchestration of the cycle.

> Given the weight of each *Gesellen* Lied, Mahler had to create a strong tonal scheme in order to make the encompassing cyclic 'form' a convincing one. As is clear from the printer's copy of the pianoforte version, sometime between late 1895 and 1897 he transposed the two middle songs up by a minor second and a minor third, respectively.
>
> The fact that Mahler transposed only two of the four songs implies that he was drawing on experience gained in the ordering of the large-scale, cyclic tonal structures of the First and Second Symphonies. (Roman 80 – 81)

With *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Mahler takes the Lied and transforms it into a symphonic idiom, paving the way for others after him to expand and develop the genre.

Arnold Schoenberg – A Bridge to Britten

As I will show later in this work, Arnold Schoenberg played a significant role in Benjamin Britten's compositional development, and to that end, I think it important to discuss Schoenberg and his contribution to the song cycle. Schoenberg is most often associated with his development of the twelve-tone system, but his early compositions were very much tonal – only later did he push the boundaries of tonality, ultimately breaking through them. As Laura Turnbridge states

> [t]he greatest challenge in the first decade of the twentieth century was how to compose in the absence of functional harmony – without the strong pull towards a tonal centre on which composers such as Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann could rely but that … in the music of Wagner, Mahler, Musorgsky [sic] and Debussy, was gradually losing its power. (112)

Thus, her statement underscores my attempt to build the bridge I believe exists between Schoenberg and Britten. To that end, I will examine three song cycles that clearly show Schoenberg's progression from tonality to atonality: *Six Orchestral Songs*, Op. 8; *Four Orchestral Songs*, Op. 22; and *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21, which represent a small portion of the compositional output that had a profound effect on Britten.

At the Edge of Tonality

As mentioned above, Arnold Schoenberg began his compositional output firmly established in the realm of tonality. One of his early songs cycles, *Six Orchestral Songs*, Op. 8, composed from 1903 – 1905 clearly demonstrates this. In a letter to Oskar Posa, the chairman of the Vereinigung schaffender Tonkünstler[27], Schoenberg wrote "I have begun a new song for orchestra (the 4th). I think it will be very good! This time I have taken it upon myself to combine all of the arts of part writing with the art of instrumentation. I hope I shall succeed" (qtd. in Schoenberg, *Sechs Lieder*, pref.). As with all vocal music, the text precedes the music, but Schoenberg believed that music could, and does transform the text, and at times, can better interpret the poet's intent. Evidence of this lies in the following quote.

> A few years ago, I was deeply ashamed, when I discovered in several Schubert songs, well-known to me, that I had absolutely no idea what was going on in the poems on which they were based. But when I had read the poems it became clear to me that I had gained absolutely nothing for the understanding of the songs thereby, since the poems did not make it necessary for me to change my conception of the musical interpretation in the slightest degree. On the contrary, it appeared that, without knowing the poem, I had grasped the content, perhaps even more profoundly than if I had clung to the surface of the mere thoughts expressed in words. For me, even more decisive than this experience was the fact, inspired by the sound of the first words of the text, I had composed many of my songs straight through to the end without troubling myself in the slightest about the continuation of the poetic events, without even grasping them in the ecstasy of composing, and that only days later I thought of looking back to see just what was the real poetic content of my song. It turned out, to my greatest astonishment, that I had never done greater justice to the poet than when, guided by my first contact with the sound of the beginning, I divined everything that obviously had to follow this first sound with inevitability.
>
> Thence it became clear to me that the work of art is like every other complete organism. It is so homogenous in its composition that in every little detail it reveals its truest in-most essence. When one cuts into any part of the human body, the same thing always comes out – blood. When one hears the verse of a poem, a measure of composition, one is in a position to comprehend the whole. Even so, a word, a glance, a gesture, the gait, even the color of hair, are sufficient to reveal the personality of a human being. So I had completely understood the Schubert songs, together with their poems, from the music alone, and the poems of Stefan George from their sound alone, with a perfection that by analysis and synthesis, could hardly have been attained, but certainly not surpassed. However, such impressions usually address themselves to the intellect later on, and demand that I prepare them for the general applicability, that it dissect and sort them, that it measure and test them, and resolve into details what we possess as a whole. And even artistic creation often goes this roundabout way before it arrives at the real conception. When Karl Kraus calls language the mother of thought, and Wassily Kandinsky and Oskar Kokoschka paint pictures the objective theme of which is hardly more than an excuse to improvise colors and forms and to express themselves as only the

[27] Association of Creative Musicians

> musician expressed himself until now, these are symptoms of a gradually expanding knowledge of the true nature of art … in all music composed to poetry, the exactitude of the reproduction of the events is as irrelevant to the artistic value as is the resemblance of a portrait to its model.
>
> When one has perceived this, it is also easy to understand that the outward correspondence between music and text, as exhibited in declaration, tempo and dynamics, has but little to do with the inward correspondence, and belongs to the same stage of primitive imitation of nature as the copying of a model. Apparent superficial divergences can be necessary because of parallelism on a higher level. Therefore, the judgement on the basis of the text is just as reliable as the judgment of albumen according to the characteristics of carbon. (Schoenberg, *Style and Idea* 4 – 6)

What Schoenberg is saying here is that when he listened to some Schubert songs with which he was very familiar, he nonetheless, did not know what the poems were about; they had not communicated anything to him: only the music had. Upon reading the poems without the music, he was surprised to find out that he had actually understood them by having understood the music to which they had been set. He was convinced that the music helped him to understand the poems much better than had he would have without the music. This goes to show that the power music has to communicate where a text may not.

Returning to his *Six Orchestral Songs*, Schoenberg chose the poetry of Heinrich Hart for the first song, "Natur" ("Nature"), for songs 2 and 3, poetry from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, "Das Wappenschild" ("The Coat of Arms") and "Sehnsucht" ("Longing"), respectively, and for the last three songs, "Nie ward ich, Herrin, müd" ("Never Will I Tire, Mistress"), "Voll jener Süsse" ("Full of Sweetness"), and "Wenn Vöglein klagen" ("If the Birds Complain"), sonnets by the Italian, Francesco Petrarch. The texts, like those of most Lieder of the 19th and early 20th centuries, contain Romantic elements: nature, longing, unrequited love, and death. However, Walter Frisch, in his essay entitled "Schoenberg's Lieder", claims that the collection of songs was not conceived as a cycle (cf. 22). Since he gives no reason for his claim, it is somewhat difficult to discuss. However, I believe Schoenberg, himself, did not view the work as a unified cycle, because shortly before its

premiere in 1913[28], Schoenberg wrote to Alexander Zemlinsky, his brother-in-law, saying that if he had had the choice, he would have been more inclined towards the four songs for tenor voice than to the other two ("Natur" and "Sehnsucht"). He believed "Wappenschild" to be the most effective, but, at the same time, thought the Petrarch songs to be the best (cf. Schoenberg qtd. in Schoenberg, *Sechs Lieder*, pref.). This clearly shows that Schoenberg did not think of the songs as being a cohesive unit. This may be because Schoenberg used texts from different sources for the songs. Although the texts come from different sources, something that Frisch says is "something of a miscellany" (22), creating cycles using the texts of different poets is something that would become more prevalent in cycles composed later, such as by Britten. Nonetheless, most scholars consider the six songs to be separate works, almost six different operatic arias, each with its own prelude and postlude.

When one listens to the cycle, the lush harmonies of Wagner's and Mahler's orchestrations come to mind. Frisch states that the songs contain "an advanced harmonic language and a richness of counterpoint" (22). Here, I must agree with him. If one is unfamiliar with the piece, one might assume that Wagner had composed the work, for each song is evidence of the "advanced harmonic language and richness of counterpoint" that Frisch mentions, and in them, one can certainly hear the influence that Wagner had on Schoenberg.

Even though the songs are all tonal, Schoenberg begins to experiment with stretching the bounds of tonality. This is most evident in the fifth song, "Voll jener Süße", where Schoenberg utilizes what he calls "schwebende Tonalität" (fluctuating tonality) (qtd. in Morgan 55). In this piece, triads are avoided throughout most of the song, and the tonic key of Db is shadowed by, and frequently juxtaposed with B (cf. Frisch 22). Schoenberg says the following about this technique:

[28] Between the time the songs were finished and their premiere on 14 July, 1913, and their subsequent publication by Universal Edition, Schoenberg had heavily revised them.

> If the key is to fluctuate, it will have to be established somewhere. But not too firmly; it should be loose enough to yield. Therefore it is advantageous to select two keys that have some chords in common, for example the Neapolitan sixth or the augmented six-five chord. C major and Db major or A minor and Bb major are pairs of keys so related. If we add the relative minor keys, by fluctuating between C minor and A minor, Db major, and Bb minor, new relations appear: A minor and Db major, C major and Bb minor; the dominant of Bb minor is the augmented six-five chord of A minor, etc. It is evident that vagrant chords will play a leading role here: diminished and augmented seventh chords, Neapolitan sixth, augmented triad. (qtd. in Morgan 55)

As we can see here, the tonal center is never clearly stated, but merely implied. That the fifth song is so different from the other four, lends credence to Frisch's claim that Op. 8 is not a song cycle in the traditional sense. Thus, the fifth song shows that Schoenberg was already thinking about how to stretch the bounds of tonality, something he would continue to develop in later pieces and song cycles, which brings me to the next piece I would like to discuss, Op 22.

Composed from 1913 – 1916, the *Four Orchestral Songs*, Op. 22, belong to what is known as Schoenberg's "free atonal" period[29]. The first song, "Seraphita", was composed in 1913. During the winter of 1914 – 1915, Schoenberg composed the next two songs, "Alle, welche dich suchen" ("All Who Seek You") and "Mach mich zum Wächter deiner Weiten" ("Make Me the Guardian of Your Creation"). The last song, "Vorgefühl" ("Premonition"), was composed in 1916 during his stint in the Austrian army. The first song is based on the

[29] In his talk on this cycle that he presented in 1932, he refers to this style as expressionism. "About 1908 I had taken the first steps – also with songs – into that domain of composition, which is falsely called atonal, and whose distinguishing characteristic is the abandonment both of a tonal center and the methods of dissonance-treatment that had been customary up to that time. It was this latter feature, as I subsequently ascertained, that occurred if the perception of a dissonance could be equated with that of consonance …

There are, of course, various means of different value with which to produce formal cohesion within a piece of music. One of these means, tonal harmony, with its emphasis on tonal centers, guaranteed not only cohesion, but also the clarity of design by articulating the constituent parts. By not using this device in the new direction my music was taking, I was compelled, in the first place, to renounce not only the construction of larger forms, but to avoid the employment of larger melodies – as well as all formal musical elements dependent on the frequent repetition of motifs. It seemed at first impossible to find pertinent substitutes for these through musical means. Unwittingly, and therefore rightly, I found help where music always finds it when it has reached a crucial point in its development. *This, and this alone,* is what is called Expressionism: a piece of music does not create its formal appearance out of the logic of its *own* material, but, guided by the feeling for internal and external processes, and in *bringing these to expression*, it is assisted by feelings, insights, occurrences, impressions and the like, mainly in the form of poetry – whether it be in the period of the first operas, the *Lied*, or program music.

At the time I wrote this Songs, I had overcome the initial difficulties of the new style to a certain extent even though it was only through composition with 12 tones that the formal possibilities of an absolute music were unleashed and broke through, freed from all admixture of extra-musical elements". (Schoenberg, *Sechs Lieder* 2 – 3)

poetry of the Englishman, Ernest Dowson, and translated into German by Stefan George, while the texts of the other three songs stem from Rainer Maria Rilke. These texts, according to Malcolm MacDonald in his book entitled *Schoenberg,* "reflect a supra-denominational exploration of aspects of religious experience: indeed it is possible to view them as a fantastic, efflorescent counterpart to the *Vier ernste Gesänge* of Brahms" (250). MacDonald goes on to say that "the texts of Op. 22 are redolent of religious mysticism, spiritual longing and self-abandonment" and that they "express similar yearnings (the poet of 'Vorgefühl' says he can 'sense the coming winds and must live within them') in a language that is the reverse of austere, and which should no longer sound abstruse to us. On the contrary, its great warmth and soaring lyricism gives it a very special place in Schoenberg's output" (250). Thus, the texts, according to MacDonald, "express a supra-denominational exploration of aspects of religious experience" (250).

The origins of the first song, "Seraphita", can be traced to Balzac, who wrote a book entitled *Seraphita.* In this account, Balzac has a vision of the angel, Seraphita, ascending into heaven. Dowson's poem, however, has nothing to do with the Balzac version, and many believe that Schoenberg was drawn to the poem only because of the title. According to Bryan Simms, the poem is one out of Dowson's collection that addresses the topic of separated lovers. He says that "it is an emotive poem, at times overstated and maudlin, as the speaker bids the memory of his beloved to remain far away – except for one last moment's comfort when he founders in the sea of life" (Simms 140). Thus, the religious experience of the poem is that of a personal nature, since it is well known that Schoenberg, who, at this time in his life, was questioning his spiritual beliefs, eventually converted to Christianity.[30]

The other poems are similar in thematic content and discuss various relationships of the protagonist with God. In the first Rilke poem, the protagonist desires simply to know God

[30] Schoenberg was born Jewish. It is interesting to note that Schoenberg chose not to convert to Catholicism, which was the predominant religion at the time in Austria, but to Protestantism, specifically the Lutheran Evangelical Church.

in the same way that Earth knows Him. The second Rilke poem is a prayer, and in the last poem, Rilke presents the image of a lonely, prophetic being in the grip of an intense struggle before the world "below" has sensed unrest (cf. Dunsby, *Schoenberg* 137). MacDonald states that "[s]omehow the music manages to suggest all these complex spiritual states with extraordinary precision and, indeed, tenderness" (251).

In addition to their thematic continuity, the four songs are also linked by compositional techniques: harmonic and motivic structures in particular. Each song in the cycle possesses a high level of dissonance, while the soloistic orchestra parts create a sense of transparency. Furthermore, the chords tend to be symmetrical, and there is an enlargement of the polyphony, which could be called poly-harmony, in which entire chords provide a counterpoint to single parts. As a result, the texture is extremely dense. Motivically, Schoenberg uses the same tonal relationships and patterns throughout the work, but they are often transposed, reversed, or rhythmically altered.

Although it is rarely performed today[31], Op. 22 "takes its place along with Mahler, Berg and Zemlinsky as one of the key orchestral song-cycles of the early twentieth century" (MacDonald 252). That being said, the height of Schoenberg's free atonal period rests with *Pierrot Lunaire*, and it is with a brief discussion of this piece that I wish to end this chapter.

Pierrot Lunaire, composed by Schoenberg in 1912, lends itself well to this study in that it is not only intermedial[32], as are all the pieces discussed in this chapter, but it is also intertextual[33], which will become clear in my brief discussion of this work.

[31] This may be due to the instrumentation of the piece. "Seraphita" calls for six clarinets, one trumpet, three trombones, one tuba, percussion, and 45 strings. The other three songs use a more chamber-like setting, which feature more profiled, individual instrumental voices.

[32] Here I am referring to the combination of text and music. However, this will be discussed in detail later in this work.

[33] This will become clear in the chapter dealing with intertextual theories.

Pierrot, the character, is well ingrained in theatrical history. The character can be traced back to 17th-century Italy where it was a staple of the *commedia dell'arte*, and in which Pierrot (Pedrolino in Italian) was portrayed as a comedic, dumbstruck figure from the city of Bergamo. Other characters from the *commedia dell'arte* include Harlequin the clown, Columbine[34], a beautiful young woman, Pulcinella, a lazy, sneaky servant, and the handsome and dashing Scaramouche. According to Richard Kurth, in his article "*Pierrot lunaire*: Persona, Voice, and the Fabric of Allusion", the Pierrot character changed in the 18th century to that of an innocent fool, and in the 19th century "into a decadent *fin-de-siècle* dandy, obsessed with the moon" (120). However, in the 1830s the Pierrot character took on another change brought about by the French pantomime Jean-Gaspard Deburau who gave Pierrot an air of lunacy. This characterization subsequently became popular with French poets of the time. Pierrot's gestures "allegorized the sufferings and growing isolation of the modern poet" (Kurth 121). Eventually, two distinct Pierrot personalities could be identified: the white, moon-like Pierrot, pale, narcissistic and androgynous, and the black Pierrot, portrayed as an evil genius, inspired by seductive, grotesque, and sinister comic gaiety, or as a hallucinogenic, sacrilegious maniac tormented by fear and guilt (cf. Kurth 121).

Both characterizations can be seen in the poetry of the Belgian, Albert Giraud, who, in 1884, wrote a collection entitled *Pierrot lunaire: Rondels bergamasques*[35]. According to Robert Vilain, "Giraud uses Pierrot's inner and outer landscape to explore the artistic challenge of bringing Parnassian poetic restraint into contact with Symbolist poetic sensuousness, without falling into Decadent excesses" (qtd. in Kurth 121). This was no easy feat because in Belgian poetic circles, the Symbolists and the Decadents each had their own ideas of how the Pierrot character should be portrayed. In 1892, the poems were translated

[34] Columbine also finds her way into Schoenberg's adaptation.

[35] A rondel is a verse form originating in French lyrical poetry of the 14th century, while the word, bergamasque is an adjective used to refer to the city of Bergamo in Italy. It also refers to a type of theater piece originating in Venice that employs farcical elements, or to specify a type of folk dance (for which music was often composed) associated with Bergamo.

into German by Otto Erich Hartleben, who maintained the structure of Giraud's poetry (the thirteen-line rondel form). However, Hartleben eliminated Giraud's rhyming scheme, changed the lengths of a number of lines, and made a number of other significant changes. As a result, he was able to present the poems as expressions of an inner crisis, and not something for aesthetic debate. This is the Pierrot that captured the attention and imagination of the actress Albertine Zehme[36].

In 1911, Zehme sent the Hartleben translation to Schoenberg and asked him if he would be interested in composing a more elaborate version of the poems. Schoenberg accepted the offer and agreed to set at least 20 of the 50 poems with music for piano and two additional instruments. He began composing on March 12, 1912 and was finished with the entire work by the beginning of October of the same year. His original idea of 20 poems, piano, and two additional instruments, grew to 21 poems with piano and five additional instruments. It is common knowledge that Schoenberg was fascinated with numerology, which is reflected in this work: the official title is *Dreimal sieben Gedichte aus Albert Girauds Pierrot lunaire*[37].

> … Schoenberg finished the individual settings in early July, and then completely revised his preliminary ordering so as to fashion an overall narrative in three groups of seven poems each – thus the 'dreimal sieben' (three times seven) in the work's title. Each group represents a contrasting facet of Pierrot's psychology in a multiparty narrative of his exploits. (Kurth 122)

In the first part, Pierrot is obsessed, and intoxicated by the moon. He fantasizes about love, sex, and religion, but as the moon wanes, Pierrot's health takes a progressive turn for the worse. Part II is very dark, partly because the moon is in its new phase where it is not visible. Because the moon is absent, Pierrot slips into spiritual depravity and blasphemy. In Part III, Pierrot becomes nostalgic and longs for Bergamo and the past. Even though the overarching themes of all three sections are as I have just mentioned, one must realize that there is no strict

[36] Zehme, well-known for organizing evenings of poetry readings and recitations with piano or small ensembles, had already performed the Hartleben version in Berlin during the previous season.
[37] *Three Times Seven Poems from Albert Giraud's Pierrot lunaire*.

narrative. Furthermore, it is not clear which character is represented by the voice. It could be that no character was intended at all, but because Schoenberg never spoke about the vocal characterizations, we can only speculate about their representation.

Throughout the work, Schoenberg uses traditional musical forms, but through atonality, the forms can be somewhat difficult to recognize simply by listening to them. This is evidenced by "[t]he strict organization of the passacaglia 'Nacht' (No. 8), the three-part invention of 'Madonna' (No. 6) clearly indebted to the study of Bach, [and] the contrapuntal miracle 'Der Mondfleck' (No. 18) …" (MacDonald 211). As Brinkman points out, "There is not a single piece in *Pierrot Lunaire* that is not based upon pre-existing material. The entire cycle indeed is music about music" (qtd. in Kurth 123). Kurth goes on to say the music is filled with fleeting instances of tonality, but that these references conjure up a large supplementary intertext[38] of musical works, each with its on persona, similar to the characters of the *commedia dell'arte* (cf. 123 – 124).

Even though this idea of intramedial referencing in *Pierrot Lunaire* is quite exciting, perhaps what is most striking about this piece is Schoenberg's use of the voice. After he had finished the cycle, he expressly stated that the notation he had assigned to the voice was not to be sung, but rather merely touched upon and then quickly left. That the vocalist sometimes may not reach the note indicated would be within the parameters of execution. In fact, Charles Rosen states in his biography on Schoenberg that it is expected that the vocalist improvise and be free to hit or miss the given pitches. Indeed, Rosen deems such freedom absolutely necessary to performing *Pierrot Lunaire* (cf. 59 – 60). In 2004, Eliezer Rapoport conducted a study into the origins of Schoenberg's Sprechgesang. He states that

> [t]he rhythm was determined by the syllable structure of the German language in Hartleben's texts, and the "melodic line" (*sprechmelodie*) [sic] of the vocal part was molded by intonation patterns of German speech. This was demonstrated by comparing the intonation contours of the texts of four poems read aloud by two persons whose

[38] For the purpose of this study, I will use the term intramedial quotation put forth by Wolf to refer to music that references other pieces of music. The term intertextuality will be applied to written texts that refer to other written texts.

> mother tongue is German, with Schoenberg's melodic vocal lines in the melodramas. It seems that Schoenberg's very sensitive musical ear perceived the musical melody in the speaking voice. He molded and crystalized it in musical frameworks of metrics, rhythms, and musical intervals, seemingly, making musical "transcriptions" of the intonation contours. (Rapoport 1)

That Schoenberg was able to build speech patterns and intonations into the vocal line of *Pierrot Lunaire*, is remarkable. Never before had a composer blurred the lines between speech and song, which is why this piece is viewed as a watershed in modern compositional techniques.

Pierrot Lunaire had its premiere on 16 October, 1912 in the Choralion Hall in Berlin with Ms. Zehme as vocalist. For the premiere, she appeared in a "Pierrot" costume and with the orchestra hidden behind a screen, so that Ms. Zehme commanded the attention of the audience. The piece was immediately considered a success. Schoenberg and particularly *Pierrot Lunaire* would go on to play an important role in the compositional development of a number of other composers worldwide: Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, William Walton, Pierre Boulez, Alban Berg, Anton Webern, and Benjamin Britten to name a few.

In this chapter I have presented a brief overview of composers and their compositions in the song cycle genre to show its development. Of course, it is not possible to discuss every piece and every composer, as this study is about Benjamin Britten and his *Nocturne*. However, I felt it important to include this chapter so that it would be easier to locate Britten and his important contributions to this genre.

3. Britten: the Composer and his Song Cycles

In the previous chapter, I outlined the development of the song cycle from Beethoven to Schoenberg so that it would be easier to see where Britten fits into this genre. In this chapter I will briefly discuss the people who influenced his compositional style and literary acumen, and his compositional development by examining the four orchestral song cycles Britten composed before *Nocturne*: *Quatre Chansons Françaises*, *Our Hunting Fathers*, Op. 8, *Les Illuminations*, Op. 18, and *Serenade*, Op. 31.

The Person behind the Composer

Britten made a conscious effort to set himself apart from the English musical mainstream, which he saw as complacent, insular, and amateurish. Many contemporary British critics did not understand his cosmopolitanism or his admiration of composers such as Mahler, Berg, and Stravinsky, all of whom were considered by most musicians in Britain as inappropriate models for young English musicians. Today, Britten is regarded as one of the 20th century's greatest composers, revered for having developed a compositional style that treated the most traditional of musical forms with freshness and originality.

Inspired after hearing Frank Bridge's orchestral poem *The Sea*, Britten wanted to meet the composer (Kennedy 5). His viola teacher, Audrey Alston, a close friend of Bridge, was able to arrange the meeting that set in motion a key, influential relationship – Bridge's tutelage of Britten as a composition student. Of his time with Bridge, Britten wrote:

> We got on splendidly, and I spent the next morning with him going over some of my music … From that moment I used to go regularly to him, staying with him in Eastbourne or in London, in the holidays … This was immensely serious and professional study, and the lessons were mammoth … Often I used to end these marathons in tears, not that he was beastly to me but the concentrated strain was too much for me … This strictness was

> the product of nothing but professionalism. Bridge insisted on the absolutely clear relationship of what was in my mind to what was on the paper. I used to get sent to the other side of the room; Bridge would play what I'd written and demand if it was what I really meant … He knew he had to present something very firm for this stiff naïve little boy to react about … In everything he did for me, there were perhaps above all two cardinal principles. One was that you should try to find yourself and be true to what you found. The other – obviously connected with it – was his scrupulous attention to good technique, the business of saying clearly what was in one's mind. He gave me a sense of technical ambition. (qtd. in Kennedy 6)

Bridge gave Britten the foundation that would prove to be essential to Britten's later compositional development. With Bridge, the young boy also discussed the latest trends in painting and sculpture. It was also through Bridge that Britten developed his love of poetry[39], for they would often discuss what was being written at the time. His love for poetry helped him become familiar with a number of poets at a very young age. He would later use the poems of many of these poets as texts for his songs, and to become one of the greatest song-writers of the 20th century.

Quatre Chansons Françaises

Most people who are familiar with Britten's work agree that *Quatre Chansons Françaises* represents something of a milestone in Britten's output because this song cycle clearly reflects the impact of Frank Bridge on Britten. Bridge, born in 1879, attended the Royal College of Music from 1899 to 1903. After his graduation, he played the viola in a number of string quartets, worked as a conductor, and established himself as a composer. Unlike his British contemporaries, however, Bridge kept abreast of what was happening musically on the continent. In fact, he was so intrigued with the Second Viennese School that he eventually changed his harmonic thinking to reflect what he had learned from Schoenberg and his disciples.

[39] We will see later that W.H. Auden also had a profound influence on Britten's exposure to and love of poetry.

Therefore, it is easy to see how Britten became the direct beneficiary of Bridge's openness to things continental. While *Quatre Chansons Françaises* does not necessarily contain overt harmonic structures that one can identify with the Second Viennese School, these structures do give us some insight as to how Britten's later compositions would develop. Neil Powell states that Britten "was already assimilating an eclectic range of musical influences: the standard repertoire favoured by his mother …; the teaching of Bridge, English-rooted but excitedly informed by composers of the Second Viennese School; and his own largely independent discovery of modern French music, such as that of Debussy and Ravel" (26). One can clearly hear all of these influences in Britten's *Quatre Chansons Françaises*, which is distinctly late Romantic but peppered with hints of chromaticism. That being said, these four songs are rather unique given the settings and their musical language, which was not typical of English composers of the day.

Britten began work on the four songs in April of 1928 and by August of the same year, the work was complete. For this cycle, Britten chose four short poems, two by Victor Hugo and two by Paul Verlaine. In the first song, "Les Nuits de Juin" ("Nights of June", written by Hugo), Debussian influences come to the fore. The piece is airy, light and ethereal, and paints pictures of the Romantic night. According to Paul Kildea, the song "is full of summer perfume, and [has] an opening that juxtaposes two tonalities separated by a semitone … and an overall chromatic harmonic language inconceivable [from] the composer of *Chaos and Cosmos*[40]" (44). Some, like Powell, believe that the first song is an allusion to Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été*. This could very well be since, as mentioned earlier, Britten's interests included both French music and poetry.

The second poem, "Sagesse" ("Wisdom", written by Verlaine), begins with a sense of ambivalence, as if to say that wisdom is not easily acquired. Britten creates this mood with the opening chords, which gently sway a half-tone apart. As a result, the swaying between the

[40] Britten had composed the tone poem *Chaos and Cosmos* a year before.

two chords results in tonal ambiguity. However, the ambiguity is resolved when the voice enters a few bars later. Nonetheless, uncertainty is never far away, as the ambivalence with which the piece opens returns throughout the piece again and again until we reach the end and the oboe, with the last note it sounds, finally establishes the key.

It is widely agreed that the third song, "L'Enfance" ("Childhood", written by Hugo), is the most striking of the cycle. It is about a five-year-old child, whose mother dies. The child, who does not understand the significance of its mother's passing, continues on with life as usual. To emphasize the child's innocence, Britten adapted a nursery rhyme, played by the flute, to represent the child. This melody is then contrasted against dark, startling harmonies, which force the listener to deal with the somber reality that life does not consist of just fun and games, but that it can also be tragic and painful. In my opinion, this song sounds somewhat Mahlerian[41] in its compositional content because the harmonic structure vaguely evokes pictures of "Abschied" ("Farewell") from Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* where the melodies of the oboe and later, the flute are set against an orchestral accompaniment that is dark and foreboding, gradually dying in the end.

Another interesting aspect of this song is the way Britten combines music to signify both innocence and dread, a technique he uses here for the first time, but one that he would come to use often in his later compositions. Furthermore, it should be noted that while Britten was composing this cycle, he was keenly aware of his impending departure to boarding school, the stress of which may have led to him the nightmares he had involving his mother.

> It is clear from recent biographical research that Britten had a particularly intense relationship with his mother, and that he found separation from her painful when he moved to Gresham's School in September 1928; soon after he arrived he wrote to her saying "I have had some horrible dreams lately about people being ill and dying." The possibility of impending separation influencing (consciously or subconsciously) the choice of "L'enfance" as a text is intriguing, all the more so when the dedication of the songs – to his parents on their twenty-seventh wedding anniversary – is taken into consideration. Certainly leaving home was a major event, and even if Britten did not feel

[41] Many critics believe that Mahler's influence on the composer can also be heard in other Britten works, particularly *Les Illuminations*, *Nocturne*, and the *War Requiem*, to name a few. However, when one realizes that Britten had not even heard anything that Mahler had composed until 1930 (which is two years after he had composed *Quatre Chansons Françaises*), the fact that this cycle hints of Mahler is rather remarkable.

> that this definitively marked the end of his childhood, it can be argued that the *Quatre chansons françaises* was his last childhood piece … (Mark 26)

To bring home this point, Powell points out that the last song, "Chanson d'Automne" ("Autumn Song", written by Verlaine), "is treated by Britten emphatically as a farewell to innocence" (28). If one looks at the very end of "Chanson d'Automne", which also ends the cycle, one is reminded of the final chords of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*.

> Given that the texts are French …, and given the French sonorities and procedures of some earlier orchestral scores, it is not surprising to find the influence of Ravel and Debussy, more surprising, perhaps, is what amounts to a reworking of the closing bars of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* at the end of the work … The correspondences are too close to be coincidental: both works end in the same key, enharmonically (B major in Wagner, Cb major in Britten); the final cadences are very similar (both plagal variants); the spacing of the string parts is almost identical save for an extra Eb in Britten; the last chord is stated three times by both composers; and the soprano ends on the same note. Even more intriguing is the apparent influence of Berg: the chord construction in bars 6-8 of the same song suggest the Viennese composer with its mixture of half-diminished chords, chords of fourths or fifths, and chords of fourth or fifth plus tritone. (Mark 25)

Thus, one can clearly see that Britten was influenced by a number of composers who were both respected and popular on the continent, particularly the late Romantics. Because of its harmonic and compositional techniques employed, this song cycle is indeed very remarkable. However, when one takes into consideration that Britten was only 14 at the time he wrote it, that he did not have many opportunities to hear an orchestra, neither live nor by means of recording or even broadcast, that he had not yet started studying orchestration, this piece, nonetheless, shows a mature sense of instrumentation and orchestration. Furthermore, references to Berlioz, Debussy, Ravel, Mahler, and Wagner can be identified in the work, and through the richness of Britten's extended harmonies and tonal ambiguity, even Berg's music can be sensed as well. This makes perfect sense when we remember that Frank Bridge, Britten's teacher, was very familiar with, and greatly influenced by the music of the Second Viennese School of which Berg was a part.

Although the songs were not performed in public until 1980[42], they give us insight into the compositional sophistication that Britten possessed at an early age. In addition, the different composers and styles that influenced this work would continue to shape his compositional output in a synthesis that would become his unique style.

Our Hunting Fathers, *Op. 8*

In April of 1935, Britten took a job at the GPO Film Unit to compose music for documentaries, having been recommended for the position by the Royal College of Music. Three months later, Britten met the poet W.H. Auden, who also worked for the GPO Film Unit. The two men hit it off and became very good friends. Auden, six years older than Britten, became Britten's mentor, shaping not only his developing interest in poetry, but also his interest in politics and society. While at the GPO Film Unit, Britten had had the opportunity to collaborate with Auden on two short films, *Coal Face* and *Night Mail*. For the latter film in particular, Auden and Britten created a piece that is considered brilliantly artistic for its day[43].

A year before he began working at the GPO Film Unit, Britten had been approached by the secretary of the Norwich Triennial Music Festival about composing a piece for the next Festival, which was scheduled for 1936. Although Britten accepted the commission, due to a compositional block, he did not actually start work on the piece until the year in which it was to be performed. By February of 1936, he had finally decided what kind of piece he would

[42] The cycle was first performed for a radio broadcast on March 30, 1980, and then on June 10 of the same year for the Adelburgh Festival. The soprano soloist was Heather Harper, who was accompanied by the English Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Steuart Bedford.

[43] The documentary, which is only 3'30" long, is about the so-called Postal Special Train, a train that was used solely to transport the mail from London to Aberdeen, passing through Glasgow and Edinburgh. The poetry and the music mirror the clacking sound of the train's wheels as they travel over the rails. As the train speeds up, so do the poetry and the music. The film can be seen on YouTube as it is now in the Public Domain.

compose: a song cycle for high voice[44] and orchestra. When he began considering texts for the new piece, Britten asked Auden if he would be willing to collaborate by providing the texts. Auden agreed and chose three existing texts: two anonymous poems, "Rats Away!" (which Auden revised slightly) and "Messalina", and one poem by Thomas Ravenscroft entitled "Dance of Death" (also known as "Hawking for the Partridge"). To these three poems, he added two of his own, the "Prologue", which had first been published in 1934, and the "Epilogue", which he wrote specifically for this piece. According to Donald Mitchell, Britten considered the work to be a cycle of songs about animals and man's complex relationship with them: "an awareness that the world was shared by both animals and men, and that man had something to learn from [the] animals" (32).

> The three middle songs of the cycle … are quite clearly associated with animals and men in contrasted contexts. The "Prologue" and "Epilogue", Auden's own texts, which frame the cycle, place the central songs in a philosophical perspective … But while it certainly was the case that the frame was intended to prevent the audience from interpreting the central songs too literally, too pictorially, the actual songs themselves also far transcend the topics and situations they seem outwardly to depict. Indeed a wealth of symbolism is involved, a multiplicity of levels of comprehension; and at least one of those levels was bound up with the politics of the day, the politics of 1936. (Mitchell 33)

Before I delve into the hidden messages contained in the poetry, we should look at those poems literally, since that is what the members of the audience most likely did when they heard the piece 1936. In "Rats Away", the narrator, whom Kildea labels a cross between the Pied Piper and a holy visionary, commands the creatures to vacate each dwelling of "this place"[45]. To this end, the narrator invokes the assistance of every holy being imaginable: the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the Saints, even the Name of God. Here, man's relationship with the animal kingdom is not pleasant, but one where the animals are considered to be pests.

[44] Sophie Wyss (1897 – 1983), was high voice for whom the piece was composed. Wyss was a Swiss-born singer popular in Britain for her interpretation of French chanson. She, along with Adolph Hallis, Britten, and other musicians founded the Hallis Concert Society in 1936.

[45]It is unclear as to what "this place" refers and I choose not to put words into the poet's mouth here by extrapolating something that is not there.

The poem "Messalina" refers to the Roman Empress of the same name, who was married to Gaius Claudius Marcellus Minor, and eventually put to death because of her reported infidelities, sexual cravings, and other excesses. In the poem, she is found grieving over her dying monkey. Thus, she sits and cries fie, fie, fie. The relationship here is one where the animal is viewed and kept as a pet. However, one may ask if the pet was not personified, for to many, which may also be the case here, a pet sometimes provides its owner with a human-like companionship. Thus, when a pet dies, the owner grieves as if the animal was much more than just a pet.

The fourth song "Dance of Death" is about the sport where birds, the kite and hawk in particular, are used for hunting partridges. During the hunt, the dogs and the birds are called out by name, while the narrator, who identifies himself as a falconer, states that his job is to prepare the birds for the sport and amusement of the nobility, clearly indicating that he, himself, cannot take part in the activities reserved for the upper classes. Thus, the animals serve man as prey to assist him in the hunt.

The poems by Auden are somewhat problematic because they have very little to do with man's relationship to the animal kingdom, especially the first poem, which seems to be more about man's relationship with man. It speaks about love and hatred, reformers and tyrants, and charity.[46] The last song, from which the cycle receives its name, seems to be a commentary about man preying on those who are weak, of man's quest for power, and his lack of remorse and regret for preying on the weak.

I mentioned earlier that there are hidden meanings in the text, and Mitchell states that the outer poems were put there to prevent the audience from interpreting the central poems literally. Most critics believe that Auden and Britten were providing a social commentary not

[46] Humphrey Carpenter, in his biography on Britten, mentions that the first poem may be a reflection of Britten's struggle with his sexuality, and that his setting of the poem alludes to this struggle (81). I, personally, find this interpretation somewhat faulty because the poem had been published well before Auden had supplied Britten with the texts for the cycle; Britten did not choose the poetry he would later set to music.

only of Britain's elite, but also of Europe in 1936. Kildea states that the cycle "attacks the rituals and values of the hunting set, with its easy cruelty and gluttonous lunches of oysters and pate and steak-and-kidney pudding, washed down with glasses of kümmel. The cycle is also an attack on religious zealotry and a commentary on human primitiveness, for all its advances over the poor animal we snare, pet and eat" (120). In addition to being a commentary on the lifestyles of the British elite, most critics agree that the cycle is a commentary on the political situation of Europe in 1936, in particular Mussolini's annexation of Abyssinia, Hitler's invasion of the Rhineland, and Franco's revolt, which led to the Spanish Civil War. Furthermore, the fourth poem mentions both the German and the Jew, which is clearly a comment on the rise of Nazi fascism, the treatment of Jews, and the dangers they saw in manifesting themselves on the continent. "… [G]iven the situation at home and abroad in 1936, and the prevailing conviction among so many intellectuals that Europe and European culture were done for, a prayer to rid the world of a plague of rats must have seemed strikingly appropriate" (Mitchell 35).

Be it as it may, the political message was largely lost on the audience at the cycle's premiere. This is largely because the audience did not understand the piece: Britten incorporated many compositional techniques that were literally 'foreign' to British ears, and which made both the texts and the music somewhat difficult to understand. Thus, "*Our Hunting Fathers* must have sounded as if it came from another planet, with its fierce, uncompromising subject-matter and musical language" (Bridcut 325). From the first chord of the "Prologue", the audience knew that this was to be like no other piece it had ever heard. Even the members of the orchestra were at odds with the piece, making fun of the harmonies and laughing during the rehearsal to such an extent that Britten became unsettled (he, himself, did not hear the piece until the first rehearsal with the orchestra). In Humphrey's biography on Britten, Sophie Wyss said

> the members of the orchestra were not used to that kind of music and played about disgracefully. When the reference to rats came in the score they ran about pretending they were chasing rats on the floor! They kept asking to leave the room, one after another. It was quite impossible to rehearse at all, the rehearsal broke up in disorder. Poor Benjamin, it was a terrible experience for him, there did not seem to be a chance of performance at all in Norwich. (qtd. in Carpenter 85)

Had it not been for Ralph Vaughn Williams, who was present at the rehearsal and told the orchestra members to behave, the mockery of Britten's musical would certainly have continued. As a result, an extra rehearsal was scheduled for the following afternoon with a final rehearsal in the evening before an audience.

With this piece, Britten places demands not only on the orchestra members and the vocal soloist, but also on the audience. He employs techniques, colors, textures, and harmonies that were quite unusual at the time. For example, he uses the same five-note motif in each song, but in such a way that is unique to each, almost to the point where it cannot be recognized from one song to the next.

Even though *Our Hunting Fathers* is considered to be a triptych[47], the "Prologue" and the "Epilogue" bring a seriousness to the piece that serves as a contrast to the vividness of the cycle's central movements. The "Prologue" is essentially a recitative sung above dark, brooding chords that communicates to the listener that the subject matter of the piece is of a grave nature. The minor chords transmit a sense of worry, even distress as the voice comes in with the line: "They are our past and our future; the poles between which our desire unceasingly is discharged". Although the three central songs sound lighter, due to the compositional techniques Britten employs, their message is no less disturbing than what we hear established in the "Prologue".

The cycle is full of both instrumental floridity and intense, vocal agility. Such vocal agility can be heard in "Rats Away!" in which the voice must sing a broken, ascending melisma over 10 bars starting on C1 and ending on A2, which is then held over nine beats.

[47] A work of art divided into three sections.

> There had not been vocal writing of this particular order for a very long time in English music. As that extraordinary vocal flourish – almost a cadenza – on "Rats!" shows, Britten restores to the voice an exertion and virtuosity of technique that had come to be thought of as the province of the instrumentalist rather than the singer. But in *Our Hunting Fathers*, as "Rats Away!" makes clear from the start, the voice is required to be as agile as any instrument; indeed, the voice is treated by Britten as if it were another instrument among his instrumental resources, and he makes demands of it accordingly. (Mitchell 36)

Later in the song, the vocalist utters a prayer, which sounds more like a desperate plea, and which is interrupted musically by the rats scurrying to and fro until the vocalist, exasperated, finally gives up, signifying that the rats have clearly won.

Even though it is a lament for a dying monkey, the first chord of "Messalina" is also striking, albeit somewhat softer than the opening chord of the "Prologue". The cry, fie, fie, fie is an exercise in virtuosity that ends with a repeated note that is taken over by the harp and turns into an incessant dirge. Eventually the saxophone takes up the lament the voice began, and continues it, eventually fading into nothingness. Of "Messalina" Mitchell states that this is the only song in the cycle that most people would have expected of a song cycle on animals.

> Messalina … must have struck a more sympathetic note in the audience at the premiere, but even so, the hugeness of Messalina's grief at the loss of her monkey, so overwhelming, so passionate a torrent of grieving – was there not something faintly unseemly about this disproportion? This storm of sorrow – over a *monkey*? Once again, the music, by audaciously inverting the scale of the feeling and discharging it with such irresistible conviction – by converting the sentiment of the poem into a torrential paroxysm of grief – adds a wholly new dimension to the text: the shock of it should shake one into a new perception of what men and animals might mean to each other. (41)

In the "Dance of Death", the audience leaves the private world of Messalina and enters again the public world of sport. The song opens with what Mitchell calls "one of the most extraordinary passages Britten was ever to write for the solo voice" (43). The unaccompanied solo voice begins by singing the text ("Duty, Quando, Travel, Jew; Beauty, Timble, Trover, Damsel; Duty Quando, Travel, Jew") on one repeated note (D1), so quickly that the listener had difficulty understand what is being sung. The text is interrupted with a trilled "r" glissando from the D1 to E2 in such a manner that the voice almost sounds like a percussion

keyboard instrument. In the roll call section of the piece, Mitchell claims that the composition is such that Britten conjures up musically the sound-world of hawking (cf. 44). The song ends with an increasingly frenzied brass section and percussion.

> The 'Dance of Death' represents the peak of orchestral virtuosity that *Our Hunting Fathers* attains … and it comprises a ferocious transformation of the music hitherto associated with the hunt. Britten has been careful throughout to maintain a link with the galloping rhythm of traditional hunting music, and does so still in this orchestral passage which is not only the climax of the hunt but also, in musical terms, a strict development – this time, however, it is the orchestra which is the soloist – of materials exposed by the voice at the outset of the song. This great orchestral eruption brings us to the very brink of chaos and disintegration; and in it, Britten moves furthest from tonality and into dissonant textures that embody the strains and tensions of the dance to death and destruction. (Mitchell 45)

Carpenter, in his commentary of the piece mentions a quote Britten included in the program notes of the premiere performance: comments, which give us some insight as to what the composer, himself, thought of the "Dance of Death". This sheds some light as to the intent of his compositional representation of the text.

> The soprano runs rapidly through the names of most birds … A sudden outburst from the trombones is the first indication that all is not well as it might be. However, with an effort the orchestra recovers, and the soloist launches into hearty song … At a climax the roll-call is again called, but once more the trombones interrupt. Something depressing appears to have happened … perhaps a bird has been hurt. But after another bang the movement continues with additional energy, and a big climax follows … At this everyone falls to dancing a merry folk measure, but the trombones interrupt again and … eventually overwhelm everyone. The percussion maintains an exhausted roll; vain efforts are made to restart the movement: but the death is sounded by the muted brass. (Britten qtd. in Carpenter 87)

I strongly believe that this quote reinforces the idea that Britten, and Auden, were openly criticizing the political turmoil in Europe that was unfolding in 1936.

The "Epilogue" is somewhat different from the other songs in the cycle[48], not only in text, but also in its composition. It begins and ends with a melody that sounds somewhat like a distorted waltz. Britten chose to give this melody to the xylophone, which creates a rather bare, thin texture. The melody is accompanied by short, punctuated chords from the winds, and is periodically interrupted by the voice, which is accompanied by lush strings and

[48] I have chosen not to discuss the text of first song because, frankly, I do not understand it, as it seems to me to have nothing to do with the rest of the cycle. Even when taken as a stand-alone, the text makes little sense. Why Auden chose to include this poem in the cycle remains a mystery to me.

different combinations of wind instruments. Mitchell says that "what seems to have seized Britten's imagination and feelings in the 'Epilogue' is the idea of anonymity versus romantic individualism" (49). The anonymity is represented by the xylophone, while the romanticism is expressed by the rest of the orchestra and the voice. Eventually anonymity wins out as the melody is turned into an epilogue of its own and becomes a slow, drudging funeral march.

As with *Quatre Chansons Françaises*, Mahler's influence is also present throughout this cycle, which is most apparent in Britten's employment of chamber-like passages within the context of a symphony orchestra. This particular technique is key to expanding Britten's palette and helped him to create new textures. It has been mentioned that in addition to Mahler, Britten was also influenced by other composers, most of whom were well-known on the continent. Berg is one of those composers and his influence comes through in the harmonic structure of this particular piece. By the time he had composed this work, Britten had had the opportunity to hear both Berg's opera *Wozzeck*, as well as his *Violin Concerto*.

With *Our Hunting Fathers*, Britten took the song cycle to new heights. In the eight years since he composed *Quatre Chansons Françaises,* we see that Britten's musical language had changed dramatically. *Our Hunting Fathers* is radical, unlike anything heard up to this point in his output, or anyone else's at the time. Not only does he bring his performers to the brink of their technical limits, but he also forces his listeners to challenge their beliefs, both musical and otherwise. Even Britten recognizes that this piece is something of a watershed because he claims it to be his true Opus 1.

Les Illuminations, *Op. 18*

For his next orchestral song cycle, Britten, again, turned to work written by a poet from the continent, Arthur Rimbaud (1854 – 1891), considered one of the most important precursors of modernism and surrealism in poetry. After having read the set of poems by Rimbaud[49] called *Les Illuminations*, he decided to set a number of them to music for high voice and orchestra. Britten's choice to set Rimbaud's poetry is considered by many to be a brave undertaking because Rimbaud's poetry is considered elusive and often difficult to understand, let alone to interpret. In fact, in his article entitled "Embalmer of the Midnight: The Orchestral Song-Cycles", Christopher Palmer says that "someone of a more intellectual turn of mind would probably have spent long hours agonizing over the 'meaning' of *Les Illuminations*; not so [with] Britten …" (310). This may be because Britten seemed to have much in common with Rimbaud. "He may have read, and Auden probably told him, something of Rimbaud's background and the forces which motivated this work; but he does not seem to have been aware of the closeness of the parallels between himself and Rimbaud …" (Palmer 311).

Palmer is one of the few Britten biographers who has done research in the parallels and 'spiritual' relationship between Britten and Rimbaud. The observations he has made bear some mentioning here to us help understand how and why Britten set these texts to music. According to Palmer, both Britten and Rimbaud experienced traumatic events in their childhoods. Rimbaud, at the age of 16 was homeless, starving and wandering the streets of Paris. The traumatic event in Britten's childhood remains unknown. However, both had an intense longing for that childhood, when all seemed to be innocent and pure. Both felt uncomfortable in big metropolises and preferred the quiet of the countryside. Both were aware of the vivid sensations and impression they had as children, but which, with maturity, had become less sharp and clear (cf. 311). Carpenter claims that Rimbaud's texts in *Les*

[49] Britten had been introduced to Rimbaud's work by Auden in 1937.

Illuminations try to recapture these "memories and sensations with that childlike unquestioning wonder and amazement which is nearer to truth than all the self-consciously studied 'wisdom' of books" (312). Rimbaud's attempt to recapture this childlike state, Carpenter claims, is what must have drawn Britten to this set of poetry.

Aside from the similarities between Britten and Rimbaud, Carpenter goes on to say that the latter, in *Les Illuminations*, was concerned with creating "a language in which ideas and meanings are subordinated to the sound and the music of words …" (312). It was this simplicity, the awe a child experiences when encountering a large metropolis for the first time, that Britten tried to recreate in his musical rendering of the texts.

It is interesting to note, however, that *Les Illuminations* (probably Rimbaud's last poetic work[50]) is, despite its title, a rather dark work, part of which he wrote while under the influence of hashish[51]. Its main themes are the theatricality of life, the chaos of the big cities, and the tragic, painful aspect of beauty. He composed a number of the poems during his stay in London, which is why some titles are in English, and not French.

Britten began composing the song cycle in March of 1939, before he left England with Peter Pears to visit friends in the United States. In April of the same year, the first two songs were performed by Sophie Wyss for a BBC broadcast of Britten's compositions. He did not complete the work, however, until months later, during his stay in the United States. Britten chose eight poems for the cycle: "Villes I" ("Cities I"), "Phrase", "Antique", "Royauté" ("Royalty"), "Marine", "Being Beauteous", "Parade", and "Départ" ("Departure").

The first poem in the cycle is written in prose, not in verse, which superbly captures the chaotic, busy character of city life. Rimbaud describes trains, squares where statues stand,

[50] When Rimbaud was only 21, he decided to give up writing and become a traveling salesman: a decision which ultimately took him to Asia and Africa. This decision also put an end to a short, but brilliant career marked by extreme restlessness and disillusionment: a career which came on the heels of a series of scandals involving Rimbaud and the poet Paul Verlaine (1844 – 1896), with whom he had had a romantic, but troubled relationship.

[51] It is well known that Rimbaud smoked hashish, which was not at all uncommon for 19th century Europe. Even the British scientist, W.B. O'Shaughnessy in 1839, and later Queen Victoria's personal physician, Russell Reynolds, advocated using hashish to combat a wide variety of ailments.

church bells ringing, groups of people singing, and bridges traversing hotels rooftops. This poem is also full of intertextual references as he mentions Rolands[52], alluding to the *Song of Roland*, blowing their horn. This is indeed a noisy place! Rimbaud goes on to describe the debauchery and depravity of the city by calling up images of the apotheosis. He speaks of the birth of Venus, who, astonishingly was born as an adult woman. He mentions Queen Mab, Queen of the Fairies, who drives her chariot into people's noses while the sleep, forcing them to dream of wishes that cannot be fulfilled. Then there are the followers of Bacchus, the god of wine, revelry, and excess. He mentions Diana the goddess of the hunt, the moon, and childbirth, Venus, the goddess of love and fertility, and savages dancing the Festival of the Night[53]. Together, these images create a potpourri of vision and sound that reach orgiastic dimensions. At the end of the poem, he clearly states that he longs for those places far away from the cities where he can sleep and be at peace. This, too, mirrors Britten's disdain for city life, and his preference for the quietness of the countryside (Romantic imagery).

For the second song, "Phrase", Britten uses only the last line of Rimbaud's poem. The line Britten uses describes the joy someone has for the task he or she has completed and dances as a result thereof.

The next two poems, "Antique" and "Royauté", like "Phrase", are rather short. The former is rather a strange title for a poem whose subject matter is the son of Pan. The poem describes the physical attributes of Pan's son, his eyes, his brow, his cheeks, breast and arms, and how he moves softly and slowly through the night. The latter is a critique of a married

[52] This is a reference to *The Song of Roland*, where the warrior Roland accompanies Charlemagne on a campaign into Spain to fight the Muslims. During the battle of Saragossa, Marsilla, the ruler of Saragossa, makes an offer of peace. Needing someone to serve as messenger for Charlemagne, Roland suggests his step-father Ganelon, who believes that Roland really wants to see him dead. (Roland and Ganelon did not have a good relationship. In fact, one could say that they were latent enemies.) Ganelon sees an opportunity for revenge and informs the enemy how to defeat Roland and Charlemagne. The plan is successful and Roland, realizing his army cannot be saved, blows his oliphant (a horn made from the tusk of an elephant) so that Charlemagne could see what has happened and eventually avenge him. Roland blows the oliphant so hard that his temples burst. He thus dies a martyr and the saints immediately take his soul to heaven.

[53] Here Rimbaud may be referring to Walpurgis Night, to Tyska, the Norwegian Festival of the Night, or to the Swedish Festival of the Night. The association is not very clear.

couple who desire to become royalty so much that they eventually, for one morning, believe they have become that which they long to be.

The last song of the first half of the cycle, “Marine”, one of the two poems of the cycle written in verse, describes a “seascape (or more probably a river or wharfscape inspired by the London docks), and we know something of the importance of the sea as an archetype for Britten” (Palmer 315).

The second half opens with the poem “Being Beauteous”, a poem celebrating life, death, and rebirth – basically the circle of life. However, many believe that the poem is highly sexual in nature since it describes dying breaths, and a body adored which swells and trembles. In addition, Rimbaud mentions rising shudders, dying groans, and rapture. In an article on *Les Illuminations* for his blog *Good Morning Britten*, Ben Hogwood writes that the sexual innuendos in “Being Beauteous” are so overt that they can “make a grown man blush!”

The next poem, “Parade”, conjures up thoughts of a sideshow, or a carnival coming to town. The carnival, or circus members advertise their show by organizing a parade through the town. On display are all sorts of characters: people with deformed faces, contortionists, clowns, actors, even people from far-off lands, exotic, perhaps evil, dangerous, and criminal. However, Rimbaud says that he is the only person who has the key to the parade – the only person who can understand it.

The last poem in the cycle, “Départ”, is basically a farewell from the city. Here Rimbaud says that he has had enough of it. The cornucopia of sights and sounds he has collected since he came to the city has become overwhelming. He has seen enough, he has heard enough, and he has known enough. He is fed up with the city and ready to go somewhere else, where he can love anew and take in new sights and sounds.

When he decided to set these poems to music, Britten took one line from the poem "Parade", "J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage"[54] and turned it into a motto for the work. This single line can be heard three times during the course of the work: at the beginning, as an opening fanfare for the cycle, which, according to Carpenter reflects the personal tone Britten built into the piece (cf. 137); as an interlude between "Marine" and "Being Beauteous"; and at the end of "Parade". Each time the motto is heard, most of it is sung on a single note, but the musical treatment of the line makes each utterance of it distinctly different. I will discuss each as it occurs in the piece.

With regards to composition, this piece reflects Britten's continued development: not only does he refine techniques he used in earlier compositions, but he also incorporates new ideas, which I will discuss in the context of each song. In the fanfare, Britten uses one set of instruments to imitate others. Here he uses the strings, the violins and violas in particular, to imitate trumpets, instruments normally associated with fanfares. This technique, musical instruments imitating others, is one that he had used in both *Quatre Chansons Françaises* and in *Our Hunting Fathers,* and one he would continue to employ in other compositions. In addition, he again introduces tonal ambiguity, with the violins announcing the piece in E while the violas are in Bb[55]. According to Palmer, the tonal dispute is settled by the voice.

> Over a trilling pedal point [in the] cellos and basses which suggests the sight[s] and sound[s] of a distant metropolis, the dialogue becomes ever more animated, even disputatious, as we draw nearer the city, until the sky appears as a mass of flickering, flaring tongues of fire. Only with the entry of the soprano who "alone has the key" (literally!) is the argument settled: she mediates in the terms of C which contains both E and, as the seventh partial, B flat … (313)

The metropolis to which Palmer is referring is that which is the subject matter for the first song, "Villes", and in this song, Britten tried to retain the mood and tone he believed Rimbaud

[54] "I alone hold the key to this savage parade".

[55] Tritonal relationships, such as the one between E and Bb used in *Les Illuminations,* is a prominent feature in an earlier work entitled *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge*, as well as in a number of Britten's later operas, such as *Peter Grimes* and *The Prodigal Son*. However, *Les Illuminations* was one of the first pieces in which he had given this relationship such prominence.

was trying to communicate. A good example of his sensitivity to the poetry[56] can be found in a letter Britten wrote to Sophie Wyss in which he says he was certain that Rimbaud had London in mind when writing it. Carpenter mentions that Britten's "music for the poem … perhaps sketches the New York bustle, though the song is probably also meant to portray the lure of worldly success" (137). The end of the song is somewhat more relaxed and less hectic, and "as Britten wrote to Sophie Wyss, utters 'a prayer for a little peace' – wishes to withdraw from these superficialities into the world of private emotion" (137).

This relaxation found at the end of "Villes" serves as a transition to "Phrase", a dreamy piece which Palmer describes as a magical fairyland, and a place where Britten's harmonies evoke images of bells sounding in the distance. The voice rises steadily throughout the piece until it arrives at a high Bb. Kennedy refers to this moment as "high ecstasy" (147), while Michael Oliver claims that this ascent "could either be an artist's or a lover's image of ecstasy" (75). Oliver may have come to this conclusion because Britten, himself, described the poems as heavenly visions "that were allowed by the poet, and [he] hope[d by] the composer" (Britten qtd. in Oliver 75). Nonetheless, this moment is definitely the climax of the piece, and simultaneously, because it ends on a Bb, sets up the key for the next song, "Antique".

Composed in 1939, Britten dedicated this song to Wulff Scherchen, a young man with whom Britten had a close friendship[57]. Scherchen could be considered Britten's muse for this song, for Britten had Scherchen in mind when he composed it. The song begins as a slow dance, which puts emphasis on the limbs of the character in the poem. Here we see Britten at his best. The accompaniment, albeit rather simplistic, transports the listener to another world, one that is filled with slow, sensual dancing, above which an extremely lyrical voice pays

[56] Kennedy states that "there is (wisely) no detailed illustration of the procession of bizarre verbal images in 'Villes'; instead the accompaniment keeps up a busy momentum and the singer provides glissandi altogether more elegant than those in *Our Hunting Fathers*" (147).

[57] For more information on Britten's relationship with Scherchen, there are a vast number of sources available.

tribute to this beautiful creature meticulously described by Rimbaud. Of all the descriptions others have made concerning the sensuousness and simplicity this song possesses, the one by Palmer, in my opinion, is one of the best.

> And since a dance is supposed to be primarily a visual rather than an aural experience, Britten contrives to give us something to watch: not only the lower strings' guitar-like pizzicato but also the spectacular effect of the first violins joining in by slow degrees, like more and more 'gracieux fils de Pan' entering the dance – one solo violin, two solo violins, second desk of first violins, third and fourth desks and finally tutti … The second violins are silent, presumably because Britten wanted only the finest, purest tone in the high register. How simple, yet how effective; and it is part of Britten's child-like-ness that he is never afraid to do the obvious – because he doesn't regard it as obvious in a pejorative sense, but as the right and natural course to adopt under the circumstances. (314)

From this description it is easy to imagine a dancing Pan: beautiful and graceful, and using these characteristics to enchant all those who look upon him. Britten's innocence, his naïveté, in not realizing the inherent difficulties in the poetry of *Les Illuminations* that most other composers would not have dared to attempt setting, are also his strengths, and "Antique" is a perfect example of these strengths.

The next song, "Royauté", is as majestic as its title implies. Here, the orchestra takes on the quality of a military band, and announces the appearance of the married couple who believe themselves to be king and queen (if only for an afternoon). Britten even employs features common to military bands of the time for this piece: he uses snared triplets and the contrabass and bass drum to evoke a march. He even decides to give the trumpets the fanfare he robbed them of in the opening of the cycle. In this song, the voice is rather declamatory, but at the same time rather free, a trait which Kennedy says is a precursor to the declamations that are present in Britten's later operas (cf. 148).

"Marine", the next song, Britten chose to set in the key of A, which enabled him to use the open strings of the orchestra to create a seascape full of light and air juxtaposed by the water below. Against the background of a busy harbor, which is depicted by the strings, is the

voice, virtuous, agile, flexible, putting on full display the demands Britten has placed on it, and bringing to life the people in the harbor.

Next is a brief interlude, dedicated to Elizabeth Mayer[58], in which the strings resemble a gentle stream cascading over a waterfall. The strings play a diatonically descending triplet figure that evokes a sense of serenity and calm. However, at the end Britten restates the line that opens the piece, "J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage". Instead of being a verbatim repetition of the initial statement, here the line is rather melancholy and reflective.

Following "Marine" is what Kennedy claims "is the most erotically impassioned song of the cycle" (148). "Being Beauteous", which Britten dedicated to Peter Pears, is an expression not only of the love he had discovered for Pears during their travels in the USA, but also of intoxicating, musical simplicity. Carpenter states that Britten chose to set Rimbaud's text graphically (cf. 138), and Kennedy confirms this claim by stating that "'Being Beauteous', … is the most erotically impassioned song of the cycle, restless trills in the accompaniment representing the poet's shudders and gasps" (148). Just by listening to this song, one is transported, if only for a brief moment, into a deeply intimate scene between two lovers engaged in rapturous lovemaking. That being said, the compositional simplicity of the song is evidenced through Britten's use of harmonic motion. He takes something as common as a triad, doubles it and then has them move rhythmically parallel to each other, but in contrary motion until they converge on a G dominant chord. Palmer refers to this convergence as a point of arrival that is punctuated by a pizzicato as exquisite (cf. 316). The chord then gives way to its natural tonic in C. Thus, Britten's ability to use common techniques, albeit in novel ways, speaks volumes of his compositional genius. Above this accompaniment is the voice, which is reminiscent of the bel canto style.

[58] Elizabeth Mayer and her husband, William, were friends of Peter Pears. After leaving Aaron Copland, whom Pears and Britten also visited during their stay in the US, the two went to the Mayers' on Long Island, where they stayed for a few months.

The penultimate song in the cycle, "Parade", takes the form of a march in which Britten assigns rich harmonies to the contra-basses, giving the song a touch of darkness. The song, like "Villes", is busy and agitated, and gives a literal impression of the "sturdy rogues" Rimbaud describes engaging in all sorts of unseemly activities. Of this song, Britten wrote to Sophie Wyss "'Parade' you will enjoy, because it is a picture of the underworld. It should be made to sound creepy, evil, dirty (apologies!) and really desperate. I think it is the most terrific poem and at the moment I feel the music has got something of the poem" (Britten qtd. in"Program Notes", par. 16). At the end of the song comes the third and final mentioning of the line "J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage", confirming that the poet knows something about what is happening in this setting that the listener does not.

With the decadent parade now over, the last song evokes a somber tone, one of finality. Even though the text ends on an air of hope, the music leads the listener to the opposite conclusion. Britten's novel use of long-established compositional techniques he employed in "Being Beauteous" is carried over to the last song in the cycle, "Départ". However, instead of evoking a sense of sensuousness, here the slow-moving chords truly evoke a sense of departure.

> … Britten makes utterly fresh and poetic use of repeated chords in triplet groupings, one of the most tiresome accompaniment clichés in the nineteenth-century song-composer's repertoire; here they combine with a very slow rate of harmonic change to give the song its "feeling of spaciousness and long farewell.[59]" We are moving on, inevitably, inexorably; but we have loved and learnt much and are loath to leave. (Palmer 316)

With this piece, Britten again pushes the boundaries of the orchestral song cycle genre. As mentioned above, he continues to employ bold and innovative compositional techniques, often taking established techniques and turning them into something new and fresh. I think Kennedy's words serve as a proper end to this section:

> Symbolically the last song is "Départ", ending the cycle in E flat after the C major and C minor of the preceding two movements. It is a simple vocal line over the plainest of

[59] This quote is from Donald Mitchell. The bibliographic information can be found in the works cited list under Palmer.

> accompaniments, on paper nothing to excite anticipation but when heard … the very poetry of sound. It is only after the spell of this cycle has worn off that one reflects that much of the singer's part is monotone, whereas the impression one receives is of a vocal line swooping and darting like the swallow's flight. Of monotony there is none, and each renewal of *Les Illuminations* unfailingly recharges the spark of genius which keeps this masterpiece timelessly fresh. (148)

Serenade, *Op. 31*

In 1942, Britten came into contact with a young horn player, Dennis Brain, whom he had heard perform through his dealings with the RAF Orchestra, and of which Brain was a member. Britten was so impressed with Brain's sound and technical abilities that he wrote a number of solos specifically for the hornist. His admiration for Brain and his love for Pears led him to compose his next major song cycle with the two men in mind. In the spring of 1943, while recuperating at the Grove Hospital in Tooting, South London, from one of his bouts with fever, Britten became interested in nocturnal poetry and decided to create the new cycle based on this theme. From an original list of 16 poems, which included works by poets such as Shelley, Wordsworth, and Byron, he, with the advice of his friend, Edward Sackville-West[60], narrowed the list down to six: "Evening Quatrains" by Charles Cotton, "Blow, Bugle, Blow" by Lord Alfred Tennyson, "The Sick Rose" by William Blake, "A Lyke-Wake Dirge", author unknown, "Hymn to Diana" by Ben Johnson, and "To Sleep" by John Keats.

It is interesting to note that the poems, written by different poets, and which were never intended to be used together, were combined to create a single work whose theme centers on dreams, sleep, and the night. Ralph Woodward in his essay "Music for Voices"

[60] Edward Sackville-West (1901 – 1965) was the 5th Baron of Sackville. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. While young, he developed a strong interest in music, learned to play the piano and at the age of 17 won a prize at Eton for playing the Rachmaninoff 2nd piano concerto. Unfortunately, due to poor health, he was unable to pursue his music career and turned to writing. He met Britten when the two collaborated on *The Rescue: A Melodrama for Broadcasting*: Sackville-West wrote the story and Britten, the music. During this time, and his time as a music critic for the *New Statesman*, he came to admire Britten and his music. It is widely believed that Sackville-West introduced Britten to some of the poetry he used for *Serenade*. Appreciative of Sackville-West's help with *Serenade*, Britten chose to dedicate the work to his friend.

comments that the idea of using poetry from different authors was rather uncommon at the time, and that "it is consequently easy to forget how original was the idea to take six poems from different authors, spanning four centuries, and link them into a single piece; for a precedent, one would have to look to Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder,* but here Britten celebrates his English literary heritage in contrast to his earlier song-cycles" (264). This is something that Britten would continue to do in later works, such as in *Nocturne*, Op. 60, (the focus of this particular study). Woodward goes on to quote Christopher Palmer who said that Britten had an uncanny ability to find inherent similarities in poems totally unrelated to each other and combine them in a meaningful way[61] (cf. 264). Britten arranged the poems so that the outer movements suggest images of night and sleep, while the center poems convey dark and unsettling images. Powell mentions that this arrangement is one that Britten would often use later in his compositions using English poetry (cf. 225).

Rather than discuss the poetry separately from the music, as I did for the other Britten cycles, I find it necessary to discuss the music conjointly with the poetry because the intermedial result is rather significant, and by examining this piece intermedially, one will be able to understand Britten's compositional development better and, therefore, also understand how *Nocturne* fits into his oeuvre.

As he did with *Les Illuminations* and *Our Hunting Fathers,* Britten opens this cycle with a prologue and ends it with an epilogue. This time, however, the horn is an unaccompanied, solo instrument and the prologue and epilogue are musically identical, which helps gives the piece a sense of symmetry and balance. When the piece was premiered on 15 October, 1943 at Wigmore Hall in London, many in attendance did not realize that Britten had scored the piece for natural horn, meaning that the horn had no valves and all the tones produced were the result of the horn's natural harmonics. As a result, many believed the horn

[61] Palmer's statement serves to underscore my claim later in this work that Britten's constellation of the poems used for *Nocturne* result in a new narrative.

was playing out of tune. The horn, with its bugle-like calls at the beginning, conveys a sense of finality, as if it were time to put aside the work of the day and to turn one's attention to the nostalgia of home. Palmer mentions that by using the natural horn, Britten "was attempting to evoke an 'old-fashioned' landscape at sunset and to do so resorted to 'old-fashioned' sounds" (317). I cannot say if I completely agree with Palmer's claim of it being 'old-fashioned', but I can indeed imagine a sunset over a picturesque landscape. This mood is confirmed in the first song, more commonly known as "Pastoral", and it employs many of the features used in the "Prologue": the prologue is written in F, and this tonic becomes the third in Db, the key in which "Pastoral" was composed. The rhythm the horn employs in the "Prologue" is also played by the string accompaniment in the first song. Furthermore, the descending, vocal and horn lines are reminiscent of the setting sun. The notes in the ensuing 'natural' Db chord are "obvious cues for the horn which responds immediately in a manner explained by the first line of the second verse, 'The shadows now so long do grow' – for the horn 'shadows' and deepens the vocal part as if in the rays of the setting sun, refracts it at a new angle, in a new color" (Palmer 318). This descending line is also an example of the musical statements and forms Britten uses throughout the cycle to paint the text. Other examples of text painting in this song are the use of the low Db which represents the elephant at the end of the second verse, and the pizzicato strings in the third verse which represent the little flock being followed by a mighty Polypheme[62]. The song enters a new tonal area, Eb, and while the upper strings continue to announce the day's end, the lower strings close harmonies warn the listener that something unsettling is soon coming.

Not only does Britten use musical statements to underscore the text, he also continues to introduce new innovations in his compositions. In this particular song, he creates rhythmic ambiguity. The piece begins with the strings playing a syncopated rhythmic figure in 3/8 time which is somewhat at odds with the strict time given to the voice, creating a juxtaposition that

[62] The French term for Cyclops.

the listener cannot sort out. Of this phenomenon, Kennedy says "… one could simply describe it as unforgettable magic – as picturesque a description of sunset as has been achieved in music …" (166).

The second song, most commonly referred to as "Nocturne", is very different from the first. While "Pastoral" evokes images of a serene and tranquil landscape, "Nocturne" evokes images of twinkling stars, agitation, and with its Scotch snap rhythms[63], places us firmly in Scotland. Against this backdrop, the tenor sings life into Tennyson's text with a number of dreamy images: majestic castles, the sun setting over a lake, distant sounds, the horns of Elfland, and dying echoes. At the end of each verse, the tenor summons a bugle, a role which the horn fulfills (again the technique of using one instrument to imitate another). According to Kennedy, "Tennyson's verbal music, so eloquent in its own behalf, is now indissolubly enmeshed with Britten's expansive leaps and arpeggiated chains of thirds" (166).

In "Elegy", the third and, according to a number of critics, the most powerful song of the cycle, the horn takes on yet another role: this time as the main character while the voice takes a back seat. The horn explores the interval of a minor second, making the piece harmonically chromatic, and in the course of the first 10 measures, the horn has sounded all 12 tones found in a chromatic scale. This descending minor second in Britten's compositions is what many refer to as the 'evil in his music'. In his discussion of this song, Carpenter includes a quote from Sackville-West about the cycle, which sheds some light on what Britten was trying to achieve:

> The subject is Night and its prestigia [conjuring tricks]: the lengthening shadow, the distant bugle at sunset, the Baroque panoply of the starry sky, the heavy angels of sleep; but also the cloak of evil – the worm in the heart of the rose, the sense of sin in the heart of man. The whole sequence forms an Elegy or Nocturnal (as Donne would have called it), resuming the thoughts and images suitable to evening. (qtd. in Carpenter 186)

[63] A Scotch snap, as its name implies, originated in Scotland and is a very short, accented note played before a longer note. It is a prominent feature in Scottish dances.

This sin, this evil, is represented by the worm that eats away at the heart, while the strings, plodding along sounding out hollow chords, represent the rose. The hollowness created then by the strings is filled by the horn's worm. One could interpret the rose as a metaphor for a person. On the outside, all seems well and at peace, but on the inside, sin and evil lurk in and ultimately destroy the heart and soul of said person.

When the voice enters, the horn is silent and the strings play extended chords, turning the vocal part into a recitative. The voice confirms to the listener through the text, what the horn has communicated to us through its musical figure of the descending minor second: "O Rose, thou art sick; The invisible worm … his dark, secret love Does thy life destroy". According to Carpenter, in all of Britten's oeuvre, "Elegy" displays his most graphic setting of evil (cf. 186). Thus, I feel justified in saying that this elegy is more than a just a bad dream – it is an insidious nightmare!

This sense of evil continues into the next song (which Britten simply entitled "Dirge") where the voice takes up the descending minor second figure. Unlike the other songs, this song employs an ostinato figure, but instead of finding it in the accompaniment where it usually would be, Britten assigns it to the voice. In addition, the tenor is at the top of his range and must sing the part as a lamentation. The combination of the tenor's high tessitura and the ostinato conveys a sense of tired determination: the tenor marching toward his end. Carpenter describes the mood perfectly when he states that "Britten's setting, with the tenor's grotesque swoops up the octave, suggests no ordinary night fears experienced by a restless sleeper, but mortal terror of judgement …" (186).

While the tenor struggles to make it to the end of his journey, the strings are engaged in a march – a funeral march. As the song continues through the nine verses, the strings' funeral march becomes increasingly complex: a fugue ensues, and the tonal relationships become more intricate and complicated. The "funeral procession comes in sight from afar, approaches close enough to strike mortal terror into our hearts (horn hysteria) and then makes

off, leaving the last word to the disembodied wail and whine of the singer" (Palmer 320). As mentioned earlier, the darkest part of the cycle comes through in the middle two songs. From here to the end, the mood is significantly lighter, and brighter.

Moving on to the next song, usually when one thinks of a hymn, one thinks of a song that is somewhat slow, sombre, and reverent. Britten's "Hymn" is nothing like a traditional hymn, but is actually a fast-paced song, praising the Goddess of the Hunt, Diana. The horn and the voice seem to be in competition with each other, racing through the night to Diana, to intercede for the life of the stag. The scoring for both the horn and voice is similar: short, quick notes, with long melismas, placing emphasis on vocal dexterity and instrumental deftness. The string accompaniment is light and barely existent.

In the last song, "Sonnet", the horn is silent (allowing the hornist time to leave the stage for the epilogue). Now that we are fully exhausted from the hunt, Britten prepares us for sleep. In "Sonnet" the music is extremely calm, with the strings once again playing slow moving chords imposed on a chromatic-filled melody, which the tenor sings, indicating that, despite the sense of calmness, the night may be a troubled one. The listener is forced to ask if the plea "Save me from curious Conscience, that still lords its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole" will be answered (cf. Carpenter 187).

> The 'lulling' vocal melismas at this point and the 'burrowing' figure in [the] cellos and basses at 'burrowing like a mole' *are* obvious touches of word-painting, as certain critics have disparagingly declared, leaving less obvious and more interesting features of these two passages unremarked: the sudden void which yawns between the deepest low F of the basses and the high tremolo G flat violin chord in the first, a chasm some four octaves deep; and, in the second, the significantly *semitonal* constitution of the 'burrowing' motif, inescapably reminiscent of the worm burrowing into the rose. (Palmer 321)

The song ends with the tenor, himself, being lulled into sleep represented by last line expressed by the repetition of single note, fading into caverns of the tenor's soul.

This was Britten's first cycle dealing with the subject of dreams and night. But it would not be his last. Britten, himself, said that *Serenade* leads directly to *Nocturne*, the

subject of this study. In a conversation with Donald Mitchell, Britten sheds some light on his relationship to dreams and night, which I include here.

> DM: Ben, I know dreams, sleep, night have clearly meant a great deal to you as a creator. 'Night and Silence, these are two of the things I cherish most': that's a phrase of yours I've always remembered.
>
> BB: Silence of course, these days, becomes a rarer and rarer presence, aeroplanes land with unfailing regularity close to the house. But night and dreams – I have had a strange fascination by that world since a very early age. In fact I can remember, rather precociously, when I was at my private school, saying to myself, the last thing before I went to sleep, or naming to myself, an algebraic problem which I had to solve the next day. Someone told me – I don't remember whom – that if you do that it gives a chance for your subconscious to work when your conscious mind is asleep. Whether that was a successful method I don't remember well enough, except I was fairly successful in mathematics when I was young. But I do treasure that moment and that's why I think I get so disturbed and distressed if I don't sleep, I find that I wake up in the morning unprepared for my next day's work …
>
> DM: I think you must in fact be the only composer known to me who has written a whole work virtually devoted to sleep and dreams – the *Nocturne*, the orchestral song-cycle.
>
> BB: Yes. Well, the *Serenade* gets near to it.
>
> DM: Yes, the *Serenade* leads into the later song-cycle – doesn't it? – with Keat's 'Sleep' sonnet. This foreshadows really the world to which the *Nocturne* is devoted in its entirety. Although that piece – I think it is true, isn't it? – does deal too with the disturbing aspects of sleep …
>
> BB: Very much so, yes. (Britten, "Mapreading" 91 – 93)

Britten has, with the *Serenade*, put us to bed, which is where *Nocturne* begins: with the poet firmly asleep.

Having detailed Britten's development as a composer through his orchestral song cycles, I now turn to the subject of this study, *Nocturne*.

Britten's Vocal Music: Both Intertextual and Intermedial

Britten's *Nocturne* has been identified with the intention of closing a gap in the literature about Britten's work – and for its inherent intertextuality and intermediality. This study will explore how the disciplines of music and literature are combined in the little-known work.

Nocturne is a song cycle consisting of eight poems[64], spanning British literary history[65] – Renaissance, Romantic, the Victorian era, and Poetry from the Great War. Composed in 1958, it was premiered in the same year on 16 October at the 100th Leeds Festival. Peter Pears was the vocalist – as so often for Britten's music – and Rudolf Schwarz conducted. *Nocturne* differs from Britten's earlier song cycles in that it is through-composed, and not separated into movements. A 'nocturne', according to the online version of the *Oxford Dictionaries*, is "a short composition of a romantic nature, typically for piano" ("Nocturne", def. 1). The origin of the word comes from "[m]id[-]19th century [French, deriving] from [the] Latin *nocturnus* 'of the night'" ("Nocturne", emphasis added); the connection with 'night' will be explored in the analysis of the poetry.

One will notice in *Nocturne* that Britten, as in his earlier compositions, displayed a keen sensitivity to English poetry and the English language in general. Of his English-language compositions, he is reported to have said "[o]ne of my chief aims is to try to restore to the musical setting of the English language a brilliance, freedom and vitality that have been curiously rare since the days of Purcell" (qtd. in Ford xi).

Boris Ford puts forth a convincing argument as to why Britten chose to compose predominantly vocal music. He says that when Britten was young, some of his first vocal compositions were written for his mother to sing. Later in his life, he composed most of his compositions for Peter Pears. Both his mother and Pears were very important figures in Britten's life, and as a result, most of his vocal compositions are for high voice. Ford, here, just confirms what others have said about Britten's relationship to his mother and to Pears. Therefore, the conclusion is a logical one. However, Ford also says that one of Britten's needs

[64] It should be noted that only the first four poems of the *Nocturne*, Op. 60, will be examined in this work. The second half of the composition will be discussed in a future study.

[65] The poets to be examined belong to the Renaissance and Romantic periods.

was to compose and to work with musicians so that he could communicate and recreate with them the very essence of music (cf. Ford xii-xiii).

> What he sought, and found, was human relationship through the composing and performing of music.
>
> And this relationship was founded on words: on his dependence on poets and his unerring choice of poems which perhaps led him into emotional realms where he might not have ventured on his own and where, deprived of the supporting words, he might not have prospered musically to the same degree. (Ford xiii)

Ford encapsulates the importance of the word for Britten. The number of poems Britten uses in *Nocturne*, albeit only eight, is the most he used from different sources for one singular work. These poems, like Ford mentioned, are an extension of Britten's emotional realm.

The poems have been garnered into a collection allowing the piece to be described as intertextual. Because they share some similarities, it is incumbent that the reader interacts with them to perceive connections, be this consciously or subconsciously, from one text to another. Judging the work as intermedial is straight forward: Britten selected a number of poems and set them to music. As has been pointed out in the previous chapters, this is nothing new; composers have done this since words and music were first combined. Regardless of whether text or music comes first[66], their combination results in a change in both. In *Nocturne*, two forms (one could also call these media) of expression – poetry and music – are joined in the signification of a human artefact – in this instance, song. Thus, the inclusion of an intermedial analysis of the poetry in *Nocturne* for this study is not only logical, it is essential.

> Intermediality is the whole recreated in performance: it is an everyday life experience of reality. This seems to us to be particularly appropriate to the twenty-first century, where we inhabit a world of the intermedial, within which we perform our lives and attempt to come to some understanding about our own reality. (Chapple and Kattenbelt 24)

[66] Earlier I mentioned that the text always comes first. I must qualify that statement by saying that in most art songs, Lieder, chansons, etc., the text comes first. However, there are instances in modern pop or folk music, for example, where the music comes first and texts were written or altered for the music.

Looking at *Nocturne* as both an intertextual and an intermedial work gives rise to many questions. Are the poems related to each other, and if so, how? What similarities and differences can be observed? How do the poems interact with each other? Does bringing the poems together alter the impact they have as individual pieces? What impact does the music have on the poetry? How does performance affect the listener's understanding and interpretation? Facing these questions can bring a deeper understanding of the piece. For those aiming at performance, this thesis will provide insight and understanding to help them on their journey of preparation.

4. Intertextual Theories

What is Intertextuality?

> Interpretation is shaped by a complex of relationships between the text, the reader, reading, writing, printing, publishing, and history: the history that is inscribed in the language of the text and in the history that is carried in the reader's reading. Such a history has been given a name: intertextuality. (Plottel and Charney xx)

Most often, intertextuality[67] is thought of as a specific text or texts that shape or influence the meaning of other texts. This can include an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text, or a reader's referencing of one text while reading another. For example, a person who has read George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* may mentally refer back to it while reading *The Handmaid's Tale*, a dystopian novel by Margaret Atwood. By doing so, the reader brings to the Atwood text information acquired from the Orwell text to form relationships between the texts the reader uses to understand the second text. However, the information from a fictional dystopian novel could be invoked when reading a non-fictional dystopian text, such as *And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank* by Steve Oney, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* by Mary Beth Norton, or *Resurrecting the Idea of a Christian Society* by R.R. Reno, or vice versa. Considering the quote from Plottel and Chaney, in the example mentioned above, the reader takes information, or the history inscribed in one text, and carries that information to another text. This, in turn, helps the reader to interpret and understand what he reads in another text.

While this is the definition with which most theorists agree, William Irwin says that since Kristeva's coining of the term intertextuality, it "has come to have almost as many meanings as users, from those faithful to Kristeva's original vision to those who simply use it as a stylish way of talking about allusion and influence" (228). Because the term has become

[67] I just wanted to make clear that with the term intertextuality I am referring to the notion of written (verbal) texts referencing other written (verbal) texts. There term is not being applied to other medial forms such as music or dance.

a sort of catch-all phrase used by many, those who wish to use it must, therefore, define how they intend to use it.

Kristeva's initial goal with the term intertextuality was to synthesize Ferdinand de Saussure's notion of semiotics with Bakhtin's notion of dialogism. She did this first by examining poetic language (both prose and poetry) because she believed that poetry "breaks the inertia of language-habits and offers the linguist a unique opportunity to study the becoming of the signification of signs" (Kristeva, "Towards a Semiology" 28). Examining this more closely, Saussure claimed that signs derive their meanings within the structure of a text. Conversely, with dialogism Bakhtin postulated that upon examining a text, one could extract a number of meanings, called heteroglossia[68] in each text and, furthermore, in each word (Kristeva, "Towards a Semiology" 28). Kristeva believed that when one realizes that meaning is not transferred directly from the writer to reader, but instead filtered through codes that are passed on to the writer and reader by other texts, then the idea of intertextuality finally replaces the idea of intersubjectivity (cf. *Desire in Language* 66). Roland Barthes states that such an intertextual view of literature supports the idea that the meaning of a text does not necessarily reside in the text. Instead, it is produced by the reader in relation not only to the text in question, but also in relation to the intricate network of texts that result from the reading process (cf. Barthes 148).

Indeed, the term, intertextuality, has changed since it was first used by semioticians like Kristeva.

Poststructuralists, for example, have concluded that intertextuality occurs within individual texts, rather than through series of relationships between different texts. According to Daniel Chandler, poststructuralist thought undermines many mainstream literary concepts.

[68]The term ***heteroglossia*** was defined by Bakhtin as "the basic condition governing the production of meaning in all discourse. It asserts the way in which context defines the meaning of utterances, which are heteroglot in so far as they put in play a multiplicity of social voices and their individual expressions. A single voice may give the impression of unity and closure, but the utterance is constantly (and to some extent, unconsciously) producing a plenitude of meanings, which stem from social interaction (dialogue). Monologue is, in fact, a forcible imposition on language, and hence a distortion of it". (qtd. in Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 42)

What this means is that language can fundamentally impact subjectivity, or as Derrida said “il n’y a pas de hors texte” (there is nothing outside the text). Thus, the reader, according to Derrida, establishes a relationship with the text. This relationship is based on the patterns of language the reader has or does not have. The author has little to no bearing as to what that relationship is or should be. Referring to Derrida then, one can see how language can impact subjectivity. This, in turn, forces semioticians like Kristeva to oppose traditional literary and aesthetic thought, i.e. the idea of a sovereign extra-textual subject that is free of context. As a result, the uniqueness of text and author, the derived sense of authorial creativity and originality, and even the sense of authorship are all called into question. Chandler goes on to say that when writers write, they are forced to use specific concepts and conventions. However, as times change, so do the concepts. As a result, it becomes almost impossible to strip the meaning of a text down to authorial intent and originality. The problem is that authors may communicate ideas of which they are totally unaware, and in turn any writing further perpetrates any number of concepts and conventions.

Looked at in this way, the writer becomes an orchestrator, unable to create anything new. He is capable only of lending, unifying, and opposing written works and their respective structures and codes (cf. Chandler 197 – 203).

That being said, a definition of intertextuality is still vague at best. However, consider, for a moment what Graham Allen states in that modern intertextual theory supposes all texts to be interdependent.

> The act of reading [a text], theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext. (1)

Some critics, such as Irwin, have complained that intertextuality can be found everywhere and that postmodern criticism has crowded out related terms and important nuances. He complains that allusion, as an object of literary study, and which was closely

linked to the theory of interpretation, has been overtaken by intertextuality. He goes on to lament that the term intertextuality is somewhat ambiguous and that it lacks the clear definition afforded by the term allusion (cf. Irwin 228). Meanwhile, Linda Hutcheon argues that excessive interest in intertextuality casts aside the role of the author. This, she says, is because intertextuality can be found 'in the eye of the beholder' and does not involve a communicator's intentions. By contrast, Hutcheon's preferred term, parody, refers to an author who actively encodes a text as a form of imitation. However, the imitation is characterized by an ironic inversion, which is not always at the expense of the parodied text[69] (cf. Hutcheon 6).

Another definition of the term intertextuality is rendered by the cultural studies scholar John Fiske. Fiske applies the concepts introduced by Kristeva in an attempt to come to terms with intertextuality, and in so doing he draws a distinction between horizontal and vertical intertextuality. Horizontal intertextuality refers to primary texts[70] that are clearly linked to each other. Fiske states that there are different types of horizontal intertextuality, the most common of which deal with genre, character, and content. These areas, he calls axes. He goes on to state that genre is embedded in a cultural context that tries to give order to a variety of texts and meanings that exist in our culture. One example is television programs, which can be divided into a number of genres (cf. Fiske 109 – 119). Looked at in this way then, a television program functions as a text and when this text refers to another text in the same category[71], we have generic horizontal intertextuality. Fiske also states that the generic axis of

[69] Hutcheon paraphrases her definition by saying that it "is … repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity" (5). Furthermore, it should be noted that this is just one type of intertextuality Hutcheon identifies. She is also interested in pastiche, adaptation, appropriation, etc.

[70] These primary texts do not necessarily have to be books. They can be a book, but they can also be something else such as music or television programs. The thing to remember here is that in horizontal intertextuality, the medium refers to the same type of medium. Therefore, books refer to other books, whereas music refers to other music, and television programs refer to other television programs, etc.

[71] This concept should not to be confused with allusion. Allusion is a passing or casual reference; an incidental mention of something, either directly or by implication ("Plagiarism"). Horizontal intertextuality is more than allusion in that the references are usually not casual or incidental, but intentional.

horizontal intertextuality is the most influential. In the same vein, character intertextuality is when a character from one television program references, either explicitly or not, a character of another television program (113). The content axis operates in the same manner.

Whereas horizontal intertextuality refers to text on the same level, vertical intertextuality denotes references that are not parallel, for example, when a book refers to film or song or vice versa. "Vertical intertextuality consists of a primary text's relations with other texts which refer specifically to it. These secondary texts, such as criticism or publicity, work to promote the circulation of selected meanings of the primary text" (Fiske 118 – 119). This, then, results in a tertiary text, which is the interpretation rendered by the viewer (in this case, of a television program). Such tertiary texts then yield information that can be used to do ethnographic analyses of a television audience. This, in turn, indicates how an audience interprets the primary and secondary texts.

The aforementioned are, however, not the only definitions of intertextuality. The linguist Norman Fairclough distinguishes between manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity (constitutive intertextuality) (cf. Fairclough 117). The former signifies intertextual elements such as discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse, and irony, while the latter "suggest[s] that orders of discourse have primacy over particular types of discourse, which are constituted as configurations of diverse elements of orders of discourse" (124). He goes on to say that this principle also can be applied at different levels: societal and institutional orders, the type of discourse, and the elements that make up discourse types.

Even though the theoretical concept of intertextuality is associated with poststructuralism, the device itself is not new. New Testament passages, for example, often quote from Old Testament books, and make reference to events described in Deuteronomy,

Exodus, or to the prophetic books. Whereas a redaction critic[72] would look at a text diachronically to argue for a particular order and process of the authorship of the books in question, literary criticism, instead, takes a synchronic view[73] that deals with the texts in their final form, as an interconnected body of literature. In the case of the Bible, this interconnected body is extended to later texts and paintings that refer to Biblical narratives, just as other texts build networks around Greek and Roman classical history and mythology. Bulfinch's 1855 work *The Age Of Fable* served as an introduction to such an intertextual network; according to its author, it was intended "for the reader of English literature, of either sex, who wishes to comprehend the allusions so frequently made by public speakers, lecturers, essayists, and poets …" (ix).

Sometimes intertextuality is regarded as plagiarism, as in the case of Spanish writer Lucía Etxebarria whose collection of poetry entitled *Estación de infierno* (2001) was found to contain metaphors and verses from the poet and writer, Antonio Colinas[74]. In her defense, Etxebarria claimed that she was applying intertextuality and did not engage in plagiarism.[75]

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[72] According to the internet site *Methods of Bible Scholarship*, redaction criticism relates to how some authors and editors use earlier source materials and impose their ideas onto these sources. This is particularly common when dealing with biblical texts where the authors and editors try to present their own personalities, interests, and beliefs and those of their intended audience. Very often biblical texts are interpreted and then are incorporated into new manuscripts. Studying how sources were interpreted and edited can sometimes reveal the social situation the text was meant to address. The redactor's agenda can be revealed if one can determine the nature of the original source materials on which the author relied, and then, how the sources were arranged, edited, manipulated, and worked into an overall framework.

Redaction criticism began as a methodology for studying the Synoptic Gospels. It was obvious that there was a relationship between the gospels in that they relied on common source materials. By examining the way sources are used by the redactor in each of the individual works, the ideological differences among the authors of the Synoptic Gospels can be revealed. Thus, this can be considered a form of intertextuality according to the Fairclough model.

[73] "Language as it exists at any moment of time is referred to as the synchronic system of language, rather than the diachronic element of language, which evolves through time" (Allen 9).

[74] This is just one of a myriad of examples of documented plagiarism. In her book *Faking Literature*, K.K. Ruthven documents a number of known cases of plagiarism that date back to the 18th century. Others, such as Martin Doll (*Fälschung und Fake: Zur diskurskritischen Dimension des Täuschens*), Anne-Kathrin Reulecke (*Täuschend, ähnlich.: Fälschung und Plagiat als Figuren des Wissens in Literatur und Wissenschaften*), Richard A. Posner (*The Little Book of Plagiarism*) have also addressed this problem.

[75] Etxebarria was twice accused of plagiarism, once in 2001 by the Spanish magazine, Interviú, and once in 2006 by the Spanish psychologist, Jose Castelló. In the first case, Etxebarria took Interviú to court, but the judge ruled that Etxebarria had indeed plagiarized. In the second case, Castelló sued Etxebarria for using passages from an

Another, perhaps more well-known, example is Alex Haley who wrote and won a Pulitzer Prize for his novel *Roots* (1976). The novel chronicles the history of several generations of an African-American family living in the United States, of which Haley claimed to be a part. Haley claimed that he did years of research into his ancestors before writing the book, but a number of historians cast doubt not only on his research, but also on whether Kunte Kinte, the man Haley claimed was his ancestor, actually existed. In 1978, after the novel had been made into a miniseries, Haley was sued by Harold Courlander, who said that passages of *Roots* were taken from his novel *The African* (1967). Haley later admitted that some sections of *Roots* seemed to have originally appeared in *The African*. Other authors caught plagiarizing include Stephen Ambrose, *Band of Brothers* (1992) and *Crazy Horse and Custer* (1975), and James Frey, *A Million Little Pieces* (2003), just to name a few.

What, then, is the difference between plagiarism and intertextuality? The answer is complicated. Simply put, plagiarism is when one person takes credit for a text (whatever that text is), or an idea that someone else has produced, or not acknowledging that someone else created a text or an idea that you used. Intertextuality, Allen states, is useful because it brings to the fore notions of relationships, interconnectedness, and interdependence in modern, cultural life that the reader possesses. He adds that postmodern theorists often claim that it is impossible to speak of originality or the uniqueness of artistic objects because any artistic object, whether it is a painting, a novel, or something else, is clearly assembled from bits and pieces of art that already exist (cf. Allen 5). However, Antonia S. Byatt says that "postmodernist ideas about intertextuality and quotation have complicated the simplistic ideas about plagiarism … [so much that] these lifted sentences, in their new contexts, are almost the purest and most beautiful parts of the transmission of scholarship" (36). While this may be

article he had written. She agreed to include a warning in the new edition of the book that was printed after the trial.

true, it does not give license to authors such as Etxebarria to claim passages written by others as her own.

Nonetheless, conducting intertextual analyses is one way literary theorists go about examining texts. Some of those methods will be used in this study. The key idea in reading this analysis is what Plottel and Charney have said – readers bring their knowledge to the text. In other words, real intertextuality can occur only when the reader is present. This is not saying that the author is not important – he is. Generally, authors write in conventions that are recognized and accepted by their peers, so that they can be read by the public. One can go a step further and say that without the reader, there is fundamentally no intertextuality. At the same time the reader has to recognize and be familiar with the conventions the author has used to create the text. If the reader is ignorant of these conventions and traditions, then much of the meaning the author intended for the reader to understand is lost. Yet if the reader is ignorant of the conventions and traditions the author has used, the reader may make new intertextual relationships that the author never intended. To better understand how this theory can be employed to the concept of intertextuality and how it has developed over the years, it will first be examined.

Intertextuality can be understood from two major perspectives: structuralist and poststructuralist. Both perspectives can be traced back to Ferdinand Saussure and it is with his study in semiotics that this chapter continues. The subsequent sections focus on Gérard Genette's development and implementation of Saussure's theories, followed by a look at James E. Porter's treatise on "The Discourse Community". I will then show that a synthetization of these concepts yields a definition by which a methodology can be employed to examine the texts in Britten's *Nocturne*.

Saussure and Semiotics

Ferdinand Saussure, born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1857, is considered to be one of the pioneers of modern-day linguistics. One of his translators, Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at Oxford University, Roy Harris, said the following about Saussure's contribution to linguistics and the study of language:

> Language is no longer regarded as peripheral to our grasp of the world we live in, but as central to it. Words are not mere vocal labels or communicational adjuncts superimposed upon an already given order of things. They are collective products of social interaction, essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their world. This typically twentieth-century view of language has profoundly influenced developments throughout the whole range of human sciences. It is particularly marked in linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. (16)

Through Harris, one can see the impact that Saussure has had on modern language. Saussure's most influential work, *Cours de linguistique générale* (*Course in General Linguistics*), published posthumously, is important linguistically not for the content (many of the ideas had been mentioned in the works of other 20th century linguists), but rather for the innovative approach that Saussure used when discussing linguistic phenomena.

Saussure claimed that language could be analyzed as a formal system of differential elements. An example of these elements is his concept of the linguistic sign, which is the result of the association of the signifier (the form the sign takes, such as a sound pattern or a word) and the signified (the concept that the sign represents). Graphically, the sign could be shown as follows:

$$\text{Sign} = \frac{\text{Signified}}{\text{Signifier}}$$

Furthermore, Saussure said that because different languages have different words to describe the same objects or concepts, there is no intrinsic reason why a specific sign must be used to

express a given signifier. When looked at from this perspective, languages become abstract[76]. Another differential element he points out is that languages have a relational concept to their elements: words and their meanings are defined by comparing and contrasting their meanings to one another. For instance, the sound images for, and the concept of a book differ from the sound images for, and the concept of a table. A third differential element is that languages are also arbitrary because of the nature of their linguistic elements, which are defined in terms of their function rather than in terms of their inherent qualities. What Saussure means here is that a word has no relationship to the thing to which it refers. Thus, signs cannot be studied by their causes, only by their functions. Finally, he claims that languages have a social nature because they provide a larger context for analysis, determination, and realization of their structures (cf. Allen 8 – 14). According to Saussure, the only way meaning can be distinguished is by difference: one sign or word is different from another. The relational nature of language implied by Saussure's system rejects the concept that a word / symbol corresponds to an outside object / referent. Instead, meaning – the interpretation of a sign – can exist only in relationship with other signs[77]. This concept is crucial to the theoretical concept of intertextuality used by structuralists.

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[76] This abstraction can also be referred to as *langue*. In the Saussurean sense, *langue* "refers to language in its synchronic state, as it is shared by every member of a speaking community. It involves the rules of combination, definitions and distinctions, which operate in language at any moment in time. *Parole* concerns the activation of such rules particular utterances. Thus, *parole* can be seen as each specific utterance or utilization of the system of *langue*. Saussure also uses the term *langage*. Since *langue* is an abstract system of rule and codes, it is not simply the accumulation of all acts of utterance, *parole*. Even if we could group all utterances together, we would not describe the full extent of *langue*. *Langage* stands for that sum total of all acts of *parole*, and so is to be distinguished from the abstract system, *langue*" (qtd. in Allen 222).

[77] C.S. Pierce, the American pioneer of semiotics uses a triadic relationship to express the relationship of the sign. He says that the relationship usually involves three elements, *representamen* or sign, *object*, and *ground* in three kinds of 'triadic structures' or 'trichotomies' in whose terms the fourth element, the interpretant perceives: These are

(a) 'Triadic relations of comparison' or logical possibilities based on the kind of *sign*. These are the *qualisign*, a 'quality' which acts as a sign once it is embodied; the *sinsign*, an actual thing or event which acts simply and singly (as indicated by the prefix *sin*) as a sign; and the *legisign*, a law that acts as a sign (i.e., not in the form of a single object but as the abstract working of a set of rules or principles: grammar operates as a recurring legisign in language).

(b) 'Triadic relations of performance' involving actual entities in the real world, based on the kind of *ground*. These are the *icon*, something which functions as a sign by means of features of itself which resemble its object; the *index*, something which functions as a sign by virtue of some sort of

Structuralism

In and of itself, the word, structure, refers to concrete, physical phenomena, for example, buildings. However, the theoretical structures of structuralism are neither concrete nor physical. Instead, they are models built on concrete and cultural realities. To complicate matters, these models are not obvious because they exist only in the mind and require an understanding of hidden or deep aspects of the matter at hand. Following this approach then, structuralism attempts to build models which can help one understand or, as structuralists would put it, explicate the materials at hand. Structural models posit that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, but is determined by all the other elements involved in that particular situation. Therefore, "the full significance of any entity cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated into the structure of which it forms a part" (Hawkes 18).

According to Peter Barry, structural criticism in literary theory relates literary texts to a wider structure, which may be a particular genre, a range of intertextual connections, a model of a universal narrative structure, or a system of recurrent patterns or motifs (cf. 39 – 60). Literary structuralists claim that a structure must exist in every text, and that the more one is familiar with the structure, the easier it is to interpret a text. This explains why it is easier for experienced readers to interpret a text than it is for non-experienced readers[78]. Selden, Widdowson, and Booker state that everything that is written seems to be governed by specific rules (structures) or a 'grammar of literature' (cf. 72) that one learns in educational

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factual or causal connection with its object; and the *symbol*, something which functions as a sign because of some 'rule' of conventional or habitual association between itself and its object.

(c) 'Triadic relations of thought' based on the kind of *object*. These are the *rheme* (or *seme*), a sign which indicates the understood possibility of an object to the interpretant, should he have occasion to activate or invoke it; the *dicent* (or *dicisign* of *pheme*) which conveys information about its object, as opposed to a sign from which information may be derived; and the argument, a sign whose object is ultimately not a single thing but a *law*. (Hawkes 127 – 128)

[78] This is directly related, however, to the type of text being read. A reader who has experience reading literary texts will probably not be able to interpret a scientific text, unless of course he or she has knowledge in that area as well. Nonetheless, an experienced reader can employ the conventions and knowledge from one text genre to another and may be able to make sense of the new text, something the inexperienced reader cannot do.

institutions. Those who have not learned these structures are apt to misinterpret literary works, and the interpretations these non-experienced readers create most often reflect the knowledge and experiences from their everyday lives that they bring to the texts.

Because the structuralist supposedly only maps what is there, literary structuralism is limited in its methodological possibilities. Structuralists do not evaluate, they only chart and compare, or link one structure with another. Grammarians are good examples of structuralists because they do not place priority on the content of the sentences they map. Instead they concern themselves with how certain words function within a sentence. Literary structuralists do the same with texts: they map the grammar of the texts they study.

That being said, a structural interpretation is not without pitfalls. A potential problem of a structuralist interpretation is that it can severely restrict how one interprets a text. An example of such a narrow interpretation might occur if a person purports that with *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare did not write anything really new because the story has the same structure as *Giulietta e Romeo* by Luigi da Porto[79]. In both texts, a girl and a boy fall in love (a formula that could be expressed as Boy + Girl) despite the fact that they belong to two groups that hate each other (Boy's Group - Girl's Group or Opposing forces). The ensuing conflict is resolved only by their deaths.

Since structuralists focus on how the structures of the single text resolve inherent narrative tensions, they believe that there must be some way in which multiple texts unify themselves into a coherent system. The versatility of structuralism is such that a literary critic could claim there is nothing new in a story about two *friendly* families (Boy's Family + Girl's Family) that arrange a marriage between their children, but ignore the fact that the children hate each other (Boy - Girl), and that in order to escape the arranged marriage, the children commit suicide. One can see that the structure of the second story is simply an inversion of

[79] Much more information about Shakespeare's sources for *Romeo and Juliet* can be found in *The Arden Shakespeare* series (edited by René Weis, 2012).

the first; the relationships between the values of love and the two pairs of parties involved have been reversed. In essence, structuralist literary criticism argues that the literary merit exists in new structures only, and not in the details of character development and voice in which that structure is expressed. With this in mind, the focus now turns to how Gérard Genette takes this concept and develops it into what he calls transtextuality.

Genette and Transtextuality

Gérard Genette concerned himself with "the ways in which signs and texts function within and are generated by describable systems, codes, cultural practices, and rituals" (Allen 93). The major portion of his work focused on the nature of narrative discourse and especially on narrative fiction. Allen states: "Genette elaborates on Claude-Lévi Strauss's notion of the *bricoleur*[80] in order to flesh out a structuralist account of the practice of the literary critic" (93).

> The bricoleur, states Genette, whether he be one of Lévi-Strauss's primitive myth makers or a Western literary critic, creates a structure out of a previous structure by rearranging elements which are already arranged within the objects of his or her study. The structure

[80] Lévi-Strauss developed the comparison of the Bricoleur and Engineer in *The Savage Mind*. Here he says "[t]here still exists among ourselves an activity which on the technical plane gives us quite a good understanding of what a science we prefer to call prior rather than primitive could have been on the plane of speculation. This is what is commonly called bricolege in French. In its old sense, the verb, bricoler, applied to ball games and billiards, to hunting, shooting and riding. It was, however, always used with reference to some extraneous movement: a ball rebounding, a straying or a horse swerving from its direct course to avoid an obstacle. And in our own time the bricoleur is still someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman. (The bricoleur has no precise equivalent in English. He is a man who undertakes odd jobs and is a jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself man, but … he is of different standing from, for instance, the English odd-job man or handyman" (Lévi-Strauss 11). Lévi-Strauss makes a comparison between the bricoleur and the engineer. He says that while the bricoleur can perform any large number of tasks, he does not subject each of these tasks to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and produced for the purpose of the project as the engineer does. The bricoleur is bound to rules that dictate him to use whatever is at hand. This means that the tools and materials are finite and heterogeneous because they have no relationship to the current project, or to any project for that matter. Thus, the bricoleur is the result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of former constructions or deconstructions (cf. Lévi-Strauss 11 – 12).

> of this rearrangement is not identical to the original structure, yet it functions as a description and explanation of the original structure by its very act of rearrangement. To put this simply, the bricoleur-critic breaks down literary works into 'themes, motifs, key-words, obsessive metaphors, quotations, index cards, and references'; in other words s/he rearranges the original literary work into the terms of literary criticism. The critic can then display the work's relation to the system of 'themes, motifs, key-words' which make up the literary system out of which the work was constructed.
>
> Literary works, for a theorist like Genette, are not original, unique, unitary wholes, but particular articulations (selections and combinations) of an enclosed system. (Allen 93)

What Genette is saying here, then, is that literary production is what Saussure would call a *parole*, "a series of partially autonomous and unpredictable individual acts; but the 'consumption' of this literature by society is a *langue*" (Allen 93). Considering this, it can be said that readers try to put literary texts into a coherent system. Therefore, both the critic (one could also call the critic the reader) and the author can be considered *bricoleurs*, but with distinct differences. According to Allen, the *bricoleur* as author takes elements of the enclosed literary system or structure and arranges them into a work, obscuring the work's relationship to the system. However, the *bricoleur* as critic takes the work and returns it to the system, thus emphasizing the relationship between work and system, which was obscured by the author (93 – 94). Thais Morgan claims that this is the basis for the structuralist approach to literary criticism: "the signification of a text or corpus of texts can be contained and fully explicated by description of elementary units and their systematic or recurrent relations" (qtd. in Allen 94).

In his trilogy, which consists of *The Architect: An Introduction*, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, and *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*,

> Genette pushes the practice of structuralist poetics into an arena which can be termed intertextual. In doing so, Genette not only makes major revisions in the practice of poetics, he produces a coherent theory and map of what he terms 'transtextuality', which we might style "intertextuality from the viewpoint of structural poetics[81]." (Allen 95)

[81] Poetics refers to the theory of both literary forms and discourse, and focuses on how the combination of different textual elements affects the reader. A structural view of poetics refocuses attention from the specifics of individual works, and places it on the systems from which the works have been created (cf. Allen 94).

Through his studies dealing with the nature of discourse and narrative fiction, Genette turns the study of structuralist poetics on its head by postulating a new theory, which he termed 'transtextuality'. Genette states that transtextuality, or textual transcendence, includes elements of imitation, transformation, and the classification of types of discourse. The reader takes these elements from literary works with which he or she is familiar, and then transfers them to a new or unfamiliar text. Quoting Genette, "transtextuality, or the textual transcendence of the text [refers to] all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts[82]" (1). He uses the concept of transtextuality to show how texts can be systematically interpreted and understood. However, he goes on to say that transtextuality goes beyond, but also incorporates other types of transtextual relationships. These relationships he divides into five subtypes: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality.

The first transtextual subtype, perhaps a little confusingly, is actually called 'intertextuality'. However, Genette takes Kristeva's concept of intertextuality and restricts it to "a relationship of copresence [sic] between two or more texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically … the actual presence of one text [is found] in another" (1). He goes on to say that intertextuality consists of quotation (with or without quotation marks, and with or without specific reference)[83]. Less explicitly, but still canonical, intertextuality refers to plagiarism[84]. Finally, and even still less explicit and less literal than the other two references, intertextuality is allusion, which Genette defines as "an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some

[82] This is basically another term for Kristeva's intertextuality. One should remember that Kristeva assumes that a text is compiled as an assortment of quotations and is assimilation and a make-over of another. Intertextuality, thus, reinstates intersubjectivity.

[83] This is also akin to Fairclough's notion of intertextuality which he calls boundary-marked vs. boundary-unmarked discourse representation. He says that boundary-marked (explicit) discourse representation is subdivided into direct quotation, indirect speech, and the use of scare quotes. Boundary-unmarked discourse representation covers presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and irony, cases where the author adopts or implies another voice than their own in the text (cf. Fairclough 188 – 119).

[84] This confirms of Byatt's claim that intertextuality is a form of plagiarism.

inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible" (2). Together, these three aspects of intertextuality make it possible to determine intertextual relationships between certain elements of individual texts. Genette's goal, with this redefinition of intertextuality, is to place any specific element of textuality[85],[86] into a workable system that can be easily used.

Genette's second transtextual subtype is called paratextuality. Here, Genette says that the paratext serves as a gateway the reader uses to learn more about the text (cf. 3). According to Allen, the paratext can be divided into two subcategories called the epitext and the peritext. Together they help to direct and control how the text is received by its reader.

The epitext consists of elements outside of the text in question, such as interviews, publicity announcements, reviews by and addressed to critics, private letters, and other authorial and editorial discourse. For older texts, it is sometimes difficult to implement all of these elements because they do not exist. The other component of paratextuality, called the

[85] Peter Barry discusses textuality in the second chapter of his book entitled *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Here he notes that "its essence is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation – they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of" (Barry 39).

[86] According to Beaugrande and Dressler, there are seven standards of textuality:
"A TEXT will be defined as a COMMUNICATIVE OCCURRENCE which meets seven standards of TEXTUALITY …

1. The first standard will be called COHESION and concerns the way in which the components of the SURFACE TEXT, i.e. the actual words we hear or see, are *mutually connected* within a sequence. The surface components depend upon each other according to grammatical forms and conventions, such that cohesion rests upon GRAMMATICAL DEPENDENCIES …
2. The second standard will be called COHERENCE and concerns the ways in which the components of the TEXTUAL WORLD, i.e. the configuration of CONCEPTS and RELATIONS which underlie the surface text are mutually accessible and relevant … Cohesion and coherence are text-centered notions, designating operations directed at the text materials.
3. COHESION AND COHERENECE ARE TEXT-CENTERED NOTIONS.
4. THE OTHER STANDARDS OF TEXTUALITY ARE USER-CENTERED NOTIONS.
5. In addition, we shall require user-centered notions, which are brought to bear on the activity of textual communication at large, both by producers and receivers. The third standard of textuality could then be called INTENTIONALITY, concerning the text producer's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text instrumental in fulfilling the producer's intentions, e.g. to distribute knowledge or to attain a GOAL specified in a PLAN …
6. The fourth standard of textuality would be ACCEPTABILITY, concerning the text receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text having some use or relevance for the receiver, e.g. to acquire knowledge or provide co-operation in a plan …
7. The fifth standard of textuality is call INFORMATIVITY and concerns the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown/certain.
8. The sixth standard of textuality can be designated SITUATIONALITY and concerns the factors which make a text RELEVANT to a SITUATION of occurrence …
9. The seventh standard is to be called INTERTEXTUALITY and concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts". (48)

peritext, consists of elements such as titles, chapter titles, prefaces, captions, and notes. It also involves dedications, illustrations, epigraphs, and prefaces which, in Genette's opinion, can have a major effect on the interpretation of a text. The paratext is thus the sum of the peritext and the epitext.

The paratext serves a number of basic functions that help the reader to know when the text was published, who published it and for what purpose, and additionally, to understand how it should or should not be read. Genette identifies two types of paratexts: those that are autographic (those produced by the author), and those that are allographic (those produced by someone other than the author, such as an editor or a publisher). The main function of the autographic or allographic preface is to encourage the reader to read the text and to instruct the reader how to read the text properly (cf. Allen 100 – 103).

The third transtextual category, called 'metatextuality', refers to explicit or implicit references of one text to another text. Genette states that metatextuality "unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it" (4).

The fourth transtextual category, Genette calls 'hypertextuality'. According to Genette, hypertextuality involves any relationship that unites a text (the hypertext) to a preceding text (the hypotext) – a text or genre on which the hypertext is based, and which it transforms (cf. 5), modifies, elaborates, or extends (including parody, spoof, sequel, translation).

Genette uses the terms self-expurgation, excision, reduction, and amplification to further specify hypertextuality. For example, self-expurgation can be seen in serialized versions of texts. It can be identified by noting the changes made in the text's first published version to its last. Excision and reduction can be identified in works in which controversial issues, originally included in the manuscript (hypotext) by the author, have been removed or altered. Amplifications, at the other end of the spectrum, can extend or broaden a hypotext.

Genette believes that all texts are hypertextual, but that sometimes the existence of a hypotext is difficult to determine as the basis for a hypertextual reading. In such a case, Genette reminds the reader that a hypertext can be read *either* for its own individual value *or* in relation to its hypotext[87] (cf. Allen 105 – 111).

The fifth transtextual category is 'architextuality', which Genette says is the most abstract and most implicit. It relates to the designation of a text as part of a genre or genres, and "involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular … or most often subtitular …, but which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature" (Genette 4). Allen says that "if literature is conceived as a formally defined system filled with categories such as the realist novel, tragedy, and so on, then architextuality is the study of literature in terms of these formal categories" (217). Genette warns, however, that it is not up to the text to determine its genre, but to the reader, the critic, and the public. Into which genre a text should be placed depends on the knowledge one has about genres, as well as the reader's expectations, and thus their reception of the work (cf. Genette 4).

One must note that even with Genette's typology, the five categories are not distinctly separate. Instead, they work together, often overlapping. In essence, transtextuality puts a text in relationship, whether explicit or not, with all other texts. The texts in Britten's *Nocturne* were created by different authors who lived in different periods of history. As a result, these texts were never intended to be put together. Because Britten's assemblage of these particular texts yields new relationships, it is these new relationships that exist not only between the texts, but also in the texts, themselves, that I will examine.

However, before I begin with the intertextual analysis of the musical piece which is the subject of this work, I will discuss intertextuality as seen from a poststructuralist

[87] Even though Genette mentions and defines his transtextual categories in *Palimpsests*, it is mainly a detailed study of hypertextuality.

perspective because one theory from this school of thought will also be used to analyze the texts in *Nocturne*.

Poststructuralism

> At some point in the late 1960s, structuralism gave birth to 'poststructuralism'. Some commentators believe that the later developments were already inherent in the earlier phase. One might say that poststructuralism is simply a fuller working-out of the implications of structuralism. But this formulation is not quite satisfactory, because it is evident that poststructuralism tries to deflate the scientific pretensions of structuralism. If structuralism was heroic in its desire to master the world of artificial signs, poststructuralism is comic and anti-heroic in its refusal to take such claims seriously. However, the poststructuralist mockery of structuralism is almost a self-mockery: post-structuralists are structuralists who suddenly see the error of their ways. (Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 150)

This quote forced me to ask myself just what is it that poststructuralists believe; what are their concepts; how do they differ from those of structuralists; and can I apply any of these concepts to my study of Britten?

Selden, Widdowson, and Broker, in their book entitled *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, argue that poststructuralist thought focuses on the unstable nature of signification. Instead of the sign having two distinct sides, it is moves along different points between two moving layers (cf. Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 151). They also claim that signs are confirmed whenever someone looks up a word in a dictionary. Furthermore, every signifier has any number of signs and each of the signifieds themselves become signifiers for other signifieds. Take for example the word 'bag' as a signifier. Some of its signifieds are purse, sack, pouch, and suitcase. In turn these signifiers can themselves become signifieds as portmanteau, garment bag, or backpack. This process can go on ad infinitum. As a result, Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker claim that in essence

poststructuralism traces the actions of the signifier as it establishes threads and cross-currents of meaning with other signifiers (cf. 152).

In conclusion, structuralists argue that linguistic structures and cultural concepts already exist, or pre-exist, and that people are born into these structures and concepts and adopt them in order to communicate with the group that uses them. For example, I was born into the American linguistic system. It existed before I was born and will exist beyond my death. If I want to communicate with other members of this linguistic group, I must learn the structures and concepts inherent to this particular system. In literary theory, structuralists attempt to comprehend the historical interpretation of cultural concepts by trying to determine how those concepts were understood by the author in his or her own time. Thus, structuralists distinguish between the views of historical (diachronic) and descriptive (synchronic) reading.

Poststructuralists believe that linguistic structures and cultural concepts must be put into a social context, that every verbalization "is potentially the site of a struggle: every [text] that is launched into social space implies a dialogue and therefore a contested interpretation" (Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 151). In literary theory, poststructuralists also try to determine the historical interpretation of cultural concepts. However, unlike structuralists, poststructuralists try to determine how the historical interpretation of cultural concepts is understood by readers in the present. They believe that language (literature) cannot be separated from its social environs. Thus, "[literature] is always contaminated, interleaved, opaquely coloured by layers of semantic deposits resulting from the endless processes of human struggle and interaction" (151).

Since the 1960s a school of thought has emerged from the thoughts of key structuralists based on the rejection of Saussure's concept of the sign and how it is applied to linguistic and literary theory. These include Kristeva and her semiotic approach, Barthes and his essays, "Empire of Signs", "Mythologies", "Death of the Author", and "The Pleasure of

the Text" (to name a few), the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan, or Derrida and deconstruction.[88]

One of the basic poststructural concepts incorporated into the notion of the discourse community put forth by Porter, plays a central role in one of my further interpretations of Britten's work.

Porter and the Discourse Community

At the beginning of his paper entitled "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community", James E. Porter, relates the following:

> At the conclusion of Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, the monk Adso of Melk returns to the burned abbey, where he finds in the ruins scraps of parchment, the only remnants from one of the great libraries of all Christendom. He spends a day collecting the charred fragments, hoping to discover some meaning in the scattered pieces of books. He assembles his own "lesser library … of fragments, quotations, unfinished sentences, amputated stumps of books" (500)[89]. To Adso, these random shards are an "immense acrostic that says and repeats nothing" (501). Yet they are significant to him as an attempt to order experience.
>
> We might well derive our own order from this scene. We might see Adso as representing the writer, and his desperate activity at the burned abbey as a model for the writing process. The writer in this image is a collector of fragments, an archaeologist creating an order, building a framework, from remnants of the past. Insofar as the collected fragments that help Adso recall other texts, his experience affirms a principle he learned from his master, William of Baskerville: "Not infrequently, and perhaps ever and always, texts refer to other texts and perhaps rely on them for their meaning. All texts are interdependent: We understand a text only insofar as we understand its precursors." (34)

William of Baskerville did not explicitly say it, but this principle is what is known as intertextuality, the principle that all the signs of writing and speech have their origin in a network or networks. Porter says that to examine texts intertextually means to look for traces,

[88] For more information on these theories, consult *Desire in Language* by Kristeva, any of the essays written by Barthes after he began questioning the limitations of the sign, and Chapter 7 in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literature* by Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker. I could name other cultural theorists, philosophers and literary theorists who rejected the ideas of Saussure, but the list would be quite long.

[89] The references within this quote are to Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. One should also note that Eco is the author of *Theory of Semiotics*, 1976.

the bits and pieces of Text[90] which writers or speakers borrow and weave together to create new discourse. The most obvious manifestation of intertextuality "is explicit citation, but intertextuality animates all discourse and goes beyond mere citation. For intertextual critics, Intertext is Text – a great seamless textual fabric. And, as they like to intone solemnly, no text escapes intertext" (cf. Porter 35). In other words, the writer is merely a part of discourse tradition. The writer is part of a team and inherently part of a community of discourse that creates its own collective history and traditions[91].

This train of thought can also be applied to music. If we substitute composer for writer, the correlation becomes clear. Britten, thus, belongs to a team and is inherently a part of a community of discourse that has created its own collective history and traditions. This aspect I illustrated in Chapters 2 and 3 by examining the development of the song cycle – a number of composers, including Britten, have elected to work within this discourse community, which itself is bound to the history and traditions of western music. In the same vein, this train of thought also can be applied to the poets and the texts, not only of Britten's *Nocturne*, but also to any other song cycle, for each poem represents a person who belonged to the community of poets, and again these poets followed the history and conventions of this community.

[90] Traditionally, a text was the actual words or signs that made up a work of literature. It gave permanence to the work. In structuralist and poststructuralist theory, text comes to stand for whatever meaning is generated by the intertextual relations between one text and another and the activation of those relations by a reader. Text becomes a term associated with the absence of stable and permanent meaning, while work is now associated with the idea of a stable and self-contained meaning.

[91] Stanley Fish, known for his theories on reader-response criticism, posits similar theories about discourse communities. Like Porter and the structuralists, he believes that a reader must belong to the discourse community to which the text belongs in order for the reader to understand that text. However, Fish postulates that texts have meaning only when placed within a certain set of cultural assumptions (presuppositions) that define what the characters mean and how they should be interpreted. This cultural context often includes the intent of the author, but it is not necessary that it does. Fish also believes that people interpret texts differently because each person belongs to an interpretive community, and that community determines how a text should be interpreted (cf. Fish 1 – 17). For more information on Fish and his reader-response criticism, I would suggest reading his book entitled *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*.

Going back to the Eco example, it is clear that no text can stand alone. Because Adso has created something new out of the fragments he had, the new text is then related to other texts from which it stems. One should note that this is the same concept Genette expounds in his theory discussed above and also what Kristeva believed a text to be[92]. Vincent Leitch argues that no text is independent or autonomous, but that every existing text is inherently related to another text. This is because "[i]ts system of language, its grammar, its lexicon, drag along numerous bits and pieces – traces – of history so that the text resembles a Cultural Salvation Army Outlet with unaccountable collections of incompatible ideas, beliefs and sources" (Leitch 59). Intertextual critics take this definition and focus on the unaccountable collections, rather than the autonomous text. Porter argues that intertextual critics have even gone so far as to redefine what a 'text' is: "Text is *intertext*, or simply, Text. [Thus,] the traditional notion[s] of a text as a single work of a given author, and even the very notions of author and reader, are regarded as simply convenient fictions for domesticating discourse" (35). As a result, critics believe that the old borders used to define discourse are no longer applicable.

According to Porter, there are two types of intertextuality: iterability and presupposition. Iterability refers to the repetition of certain textual fragments, and to citation in its broadest sense. Thus, citation includes not only explicit allusions, references, and quotations within a discourse, but also the sources and influences that are not mentioned, as well as clichés, phrases in the air, and traditions. When taking this into account, one can say that every discourse consists of pieces of other texts that help define its meaning. The second type of intertextuality Porter defines is presupposition. "Presupposition refers to assumptions a text makes about its referent, its readers, and its context – to portions of the text which are

[92] Kristeva believed that a text was not a one-dimensional entity, but instead a combination of many different texts, and that any text is not only literary, but also creative and social that reflects the cultures in which they are produced.

read, but which are not explicitly there. In other words, texts not only refer to, but also in fact *contain* other texts" (35). For this study, presuppositions will also include what the reader (in this case, the author of this study) brings to the texts. Based on the author's foreknowledge, assumptions will be made about the texts, their contexts, and their referents, both implicit and explicit.

The term discourse community[93] was first used by sociolinguist Martin Nystrand in 1982, and further developed by the linguist John Swales. According to Porter, a discourse community is a local and temporary constraining system, defined by a body of texts (or more generally, practices) that are unified by a common focus. A discourse community is a textual system with both stated and unstated conventions. It has a history, mechanisms for wielding power, institutional hierarchies, and interests[94]. Those who participate in a discourse community are bound by a common interest and communicate through approved channels, called forums, where discourse is regulated. In order to participate in the forum, members must understand the forum's history and the rules by which they must abide. Examples of

[93] This should not be confused with Stanley Fish's work in reader-response criticism and interpretive communities, which was briefly explained in an earlier note. The main difference is that the Fish places emphasis on the interpretive function of the individual community members, whereas the emphasis of the discourse community is placed on the common goals and purposes the members of the community share.

[94] This is reminiscent of Foucault's definition of dispositif where he says: "What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions–in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.

Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. Thus, a particular discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality.

In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary very widely.

Thirdly, I understand by the term "apparatus" a sort of–shall we say–formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function. This may have been, for example, the assimilation of a floating population found to be burdensome for an essentially mercantilist economy: there was a strategic imperative acting here as the matrix for an apparatus which gradually undertook the control or subjection of madness, sexual illness and neurosis" (Foucault 194 - 195).

such forums include professional journals and organizations, corporate annual meetings, and clubs (cf. 38 – 39).

The members in a discourse community share common beliefs about what things should be discussed and examined and how, what things are considered to be evidence and valid, and what conventions should be employed. Patricia Bizzell states that a writer cannot produce a text within a discourse community unless the writer can define his or her goals in terms of the community's interpretive conventions (cf. 222). In other words, writers cannot arbitrarily produce text. The text must match the standards of the discourse community in which the writer is a member. Writers, who want to become members of a particular discourse community, must know much more than the jargon used by that particular community, they must also understand the concepts and expectations set up within that community. The community establishes limits and regularities about who may speak / write, what may be spoken / written, and how it is to be said / written. Furthermore, rules dictate what is true and false, what is reasonable and foolish, and what is meant and what not. Finally, the discourse communities work to deny the material existence of discourse itself (Porter 39). Looked at in this way, the notion that any text can be considered intertextual becomes evident. This last point is rather important because the intertext can influence audience expectations of other texts. When this happens, Porter says that the reader, and not the author, creates discourse (cf. 40).

Porter's theory of the discourse community and the author's and reader's roles in that community is helpful to analyze the poems in Britten's *Nocturne*. One can assume that the poetry and their respective poets represented in *Nocturne* all belonged to an established discourse community. However, the readers' foreknowledge of other texts they bring with them to these particular texts results in discourse. The manifestation of these conventions will be examined in the textual analysis.

An Intertextual Approach to Britten's Nocturne

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there are different theoretical concepts of the term 'intertextuality'. For the purposes of this study, I define intertextuality as the interaction of a text with another text. This means that both 'texts' must belong to the same medium or genre: for example, the relationship(s) of two or more poems or two or more pieces of music[95]. With regard to the theories examined in this chapter, I feel that those of Genette and Porter can be employed for the textual analysis of the poetry in Britten's *Nocturne*. The theories will be applied in the following manner: the texts will be examined using Genette's concept of transtextuality and using Porter's concept of iterability, which consists of the following points:

1) Repetitions, patterns, and oppositions in characters, settings, language, and objects in the texts will be identified;
2) the implications of the repetitions and oppositions will be uncovered by exploring the relationships of similarity and difference that link the events and actions that take place in the texts;
3) the metaphorical content of the characters, settings, language, and objects will be identified as well as the allusions, the 'subtexts', and the connections between the texts; and,
4) these observations will be analyzed to arrive at conclusions regarding the texts' function, as designed by their respective authors.

Lastly, the texts will be examined using Porter's concept of presupposition to determine what assumptions the texts make about their contexts and their relationships to each other. Thus,

[95] It should be noted that an intertextual analysis will be applied only to the texts. The reason being that the music of this piece is being examined in and of itself, and not how it interacts with other musical pieces.

one will see that an intertextual analysis of Britten's *Nocturne* will open up new possibilities of interpreting and understanding the texts.

5. Intertextual Analyses

The previous chapter briefly explored semiotics and how it serves as the foundation for the concept of intertextuality. Two theories were identified as being useful for my discussion of Britten's *Nocturne*: Genette's notion of transtextuality and Porter's notion of iterability and presupposition. It is with the former that this chapter begins.[96]

A Transtextual Analysis

The first four poems[97] in Britten's *Nocturne* are "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" from *Prometheus Unbound* by Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Kraken" by Lord Alfred Tennyson, "Encinctured by a Twine of Leaves" from *The Wanderings of Cain* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" from *Blurt, Master Constable* by Thomas Dekker[98].

[96] It was my intent to separate the analyses of the poems into two parts – one using the methods of Genette and the other using the methods of Porter. However, much overlaps. Those things, which overlap, will be considered together and those that do not will be examined separately.

[97] The texts of all the poems can be found in the appendix.

[98] In 1661, Francis Kirkman attributed *Blurt, Master Constable* to Middleton. However, studies of the work undertaken in the 20th century have questioned the attribution. A number of these studies eliminate Middleton by close comparative analysis of his texts, by concentrating on words and phrases used, the form into which those words and phrases are put (sentence construction), the frequency of rhyme, the proportion of double endings, and the percentage of end-stopped lines. For example, *Blurt* confirms Dekker's preference for the word besides as opposed to Middleton's beside, and for Omnes, which Middleton used only twice in all his works. Based on this research, David Lake published a book in 1975, entitled *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Play*, in which he claims that the play was written solely by Dekker: a claim further substantiated by Mac D.P. Jackson in his *Studies in Attribution: Middleton and Shakespeare*. Even though these studies are indeed very convincing, critics like David Holmes (*The Art of Thomas Middleton,* 1970), who examined the thematic and structural aspects of the play, conclude that solely Middleton must have written it.

Additionally, a historical perspective does not make an attribution to Middleton impossible. In 1601, Middleton was just finishing his formal studies at Oxford, and had begun to spend more time in the theater. He began writing as an apprentice in the theater workshop of impresario Philip Henslowe. There he collaborated with Dekker on several plays until about 1608. It should be further noted that *Blurt* was written for the same company – the boy actors of St. Paul's – that Middleton was writing for at the time.

Since the most recent edition of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (Volume 1, 2006) attributes the play to Dekker; I will do the same in this work.

I will begin the textual analysis with Genette's concept of transtextuality: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality. It was also pointed out in the last chapter that these categories are not solely exclusive, which may result in some overlapping from one category to the next. I have attempted to reduce the amount of overlapping by omitting those things I felt to be redundant.

My analysis begins with the first category, intertextuality (quotations, plagiarism, and allusion) which provides a practical and identifiable intertextual relationship between specific elements of individual texts. None of the texts in question directly quote or plagiarize other works, but they all allude to other works. For example, Shelley says that *Prometheus Unbound* was influenced by several writers:

> The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors, which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.
>
> I have presumed to employ a similar licence. – The Prometheus Unbound of Æschylus, supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus and Prometheus by the permission of Jupiter delivered from his captivity by Hercules. – Had I framed my story on this model[,] I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus … The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan because, in addition to courage and majesty and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest …
>
> It is impossible that anyone who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself, that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects … Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the excommunicated lightning of their own mind …
>
> A Poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others, and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both … Poets … are in one sense the creators and in another the creations of their age. From this subjection, the loftiest do not escape. There is similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imagination, I am willing to confess that I have imitated. (qtd. in Reiman and Fraistat 206 – 208)

From the above excerpt, Shelley clearly mentions that his version of *Prometheus Unbound* alludes to and is influenced by those works that have come before it – particularly Æschylus' version of *Prometheus Unbound* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Shelley considered it important to realize that every writer or poet is influenced both directly and indirectly by those writers who have come before him or her. Imitation, according to Shelley is inevitable. This coincides with Genette's concept of intertextuality where he says that there is some amount of allusion in every work.

Prometheus Unbound also alludes to the biblical Christ. Ratomir Ristić points out that at the beginning of the drama, the protagonist, Prometheus, is chained to a rock and receives visits from The Earth, Ione, Panthea, the Phantasm of Jupiter, and the Furies, who are sent by Jupiter to torture him. Ristić goes on to say the following lines:

> The words addressed to The Earth
>
> > Mother, let not aught
> > Of that which may be evil, pass again?
> > My lips, or those of aught resembling me
>
> announce the recantation of the curse. He [Prometheus] wishes "no living thing to suffer pain", and when he forgives the tyrant, he becomes firm in his belief that "Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more" and that Asia, who waits in the far Indian vale will join him soon. With his sufferings, love and readiness to forgive the omnipotent he resembles Jesus Christ. With his defiance he is like Milton's Satan. (81)

Not only does Ristić show how Shelley's Prometheus is like Milton's Satan, he also shows how Prometheus is like Christ.

While this may be common knowledge, it is important to note that biblical and mythical allusions are present in at least three of the poems being examined. How then do these biblical allusions affect the relationships of the texts to each other? This will be made clear by examining the biblical allusions each poem possesses, which is also necessary to propose a hypothesis.

To understand "The Kraken" by Tennyson, one must first look at the historical texts to which it alludes. One of these is the *Örvar-Odds saga* (known in English as *Arrow-Odd* or

Arrow's Point). The *Örvar-Odds saga* is an old Icelandic epic, which mentions two large sea-monsters named Hafgufa and Lyngbakr (in English Sea-Reek and Heather-Back), which live in the Greenland Sea and feed on whales, ships, and men. Hafgufa supposedly lived in the depths of the sea, and at night, at low tide, would poke her nose and head out of the water. Once, when Odd and his son Vignir were on a quest to avenge the murder of Odd's brother, Thord, Vignir saw something sticking up out of the water, which he thought were large rocks. Close to the rocks was an island covered in heather, and after he had seen the island, Vignir immediately suspected the rocks and island might actually be Hafgufa, the sea monster. Vignir insisted they return to the rocks and island to investigate them, but by the time they had reached the spot, the 'rocks and island' had disappeared. Vignir was then convinced that the rocks and island were the two sea monsters, Heather-Back and Sea-Reek (the latter of which was supposedly the biggest monster to inhabit the ocean). Vignir said "[i]t swallows men and ships, and whales too, and anything else around. It stays underwater for days, then it puts up its mouth and nostrils, and when it does, it never stays on the surface for less than one tide" (Pálsson and Edwards 86). Vignir later explained to Odd that, had they returned to the island sooner, the crew surely would have been destroyed.

Krakens have also been mentioned in other works, both literary and scientific. For example, the Bishop of Bergen, Erik Pontoppidan, is reported to have extensively described a kraken in his *Natural History of Norway* published in 1752–3. The Swede, Jacob Wallenberg, also described a kraken in his work from 1781 entitled *Min son på galejan* (*My Son on the Galley*).

> … the *kraken*, the so-called *crabfish*, which [according to Norwegian sailors] is said to visit these waters occasionally, is not large, even including the head and the tail, … is not reckoned to be any longer than our island of Öland off Kalmar [Öland is 137 km long and 16 km wide] … It keeps to the sea-bottom, perpetually surrounded by innumerable shoals of small fish that serve as its food and are then passed through it. Its mealtime, if I rightly remember what Bishop Pontoppidan wrote, does not last longer than three months at a time and the following three months are spent in digesting it. During this period it feeds whole armies of smaller fish on its enormous quantities of excrement. That's why fishermen of the country sound out its hiding place and practise their profession there to the greatest advantage. Bit by bit it rises higher and higher in the water and as soon as it has come within ten to twelve fathoms of the surface it is high time for the boats to

> remove themselves from the vicinity. Then, all of a sudden, it rushes up like a floating island, spurting torrents like Trollhättan from its terrible nostrils and thrashing all around so that the water whirls for miles around in great ever-widening circles. May not this creature be Job's Leviathan? (56)

Tennyson's kraken spends most of its existence sleeping at the bottom of the ocean and only comes to the surface when an apocalyptic fire forces it to. It is here in the last three lines where the allusion to the Bible is made. Jing Heng Fong makes the following observations:

> The Kraken's origins and its reasons for sleep are not elaborated upon by Tennyson; and it is said that the lack of an Alpha or beginning, enhances a sense of godlike power within the creature. However, Tennyson's Kraken has an Omega; it is fated to death when the end of the world occurs. The 'latter fire' and 'angels' are an allusion to the Biblical end of the world: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea … the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died." (Revelations 8:8-9, King James Version Bible)
>
> There is a sense of pity and loss, not only for the 'man and angels' which will only see the Kraken a single time, but more so that the Kraken, in its the sudden 'roaring' fury, its only show of a realization of its consciousness and sentience, as well as its strength, ends as quickly as it begins with its death on the surface. (n. pag.)

As mentioned before, the texts in the song cycle allude to the Bible, to other external texts, as well as to other texts within the cycle. Upon examining "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" by Coleridge, the allusion is obvious. He clearly states in his preface that the fragment alludes to the biblical characters of Cain and Abel.

> … at this moment I cannot without something more than a smile moot the question which of the two things was the more impracticable, for a mind so eminently original to compose another man's thoughts and fancies, or for a taste so austerely pure and simple to imitate the Death of Abel? (Coleridge qtd. in Kitson 57)

The allusion to its biblical counterpart in which the first-born son of Adam and Eve, Cain, was banished for murdering his brother Abel is clear. Not only was Cain banished from his home, but he was also made to wander the earth for the rest of his days. Since there is little in the Bible that actually discusses Cain's wanderings, one can assume that the poem written by Coleridge is his romanticized version of what may have happened.

Dekker's *Blurt, Master Constable* is said to have similarities to a number of Shakespeare's plays including *Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado about Nothing, Othello, Henry IV, Henry V,* and *Henry VI,* as well as other plays by Middleton and the collaborative efforts

of Dekker and Middleton. The beginning of *Blurt* is strongly reminiscent of *Much Ado about Nothing* in the 'battle of the sexes' dialogue that takes place after the soldiers return from the war. Furthermore, one of the women in *Blurt* is named Hero, and Blurt, himself, can be compared to Dogberry, although the bungling constable was a character who appeared often on the Elizabethan stage.

Although *Blurt, Master Constable* does not directly allude to the Bible, it does allude to things biblical. In the scene in which the song "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" is performed, there are several mentions of the devil and one of heaven. However, the biblical reference stops here. There is no allusion to incidents in the Bible, only what has been mentioned.

Having shown that each text has some relationship to the Bible, the question arises: 'Why?' This will be discussed later in this chapter. Nonetheless, one can see that intertextual elements exist in each of the poems, primarily as allusions to other works.

Genette's second aspect of transtextuality is paratextuality, which is divided into the epitext and the peritext. First, the peritext will be examined, which will be followed by an examination of the epitext.

To examine the peritext, Genette says that some of the things one should look at are general titles, chapter titles, prefaces, captions, illustrations, dedications, epigraphs, and notes. The two points most relevant to this study are titles and prefaces. There are no captions, illustrations, dedications, epigraphs, or notes that the authors wrote in association with the poems found in Britten's song cycle. Starting with the titles, two of them, "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" and "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting", point to the possibility of a common theme, the night. On the surface, the titles of the poems by Tennyson and Coleridge seem to have no connection to the Shelley and Dekker poems. It is only by looking at the content (some of which has already been examined and some of which will be examined later) that these connections become clear.

The only other aspect of the peritext, which is of use here, are the notes, or prefaces, that Shelley and Coleridge wrote about *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Wanderings of Cain* respectively. Whereas Shelley wrote a somewhat lengthy preface, explaining on what themes, imagery, and traditions his poem is based, Coleridge's preface does little to shed light on the poem's content, but he does go at length explaining the poem's origins:

> The work was to have been written in concert with another [Wordsworth], whose name is too venerable within the precincts of genius to be unnecessarily brought into connection with such a trifle, and who was then residing at a small distance from Nether Stowey. The title and subject were suggested by myself, who likewise drew out the scheme and contents for each of the three books or cantos, of which the work was to consist, and which, the reader is to be informed, was to have been finished in one night! My partner undertook the first canto: I the second: and whichever had *done first*, was to set about the third. Almost thirty years have passed by; yet at this moment I cannot without something more than a smile moot the question which of the two things was the more impracticable, for a mind so eminently original to compose another man's thoughts and fancies, or for a taste so austerely pure and simple to imitate the Death of Abel? Methinks I see his grand and noble countenance as at the moment when having despatched my own portion of the task at full-finger speed, I hastened to him with my manuscript – that look of humorous despondency fixed on his almost blank sheet of paper, and then its silent mock piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme – which broke up in a laugh: and the Ancient Mariner was written instead. (qtd. in Kitson 57)

From this information, one learns how the work was to have been composed and why it was not.

The epitext, as defined by Genette, consists of elements that relate to, but do not belong to the text in question: interviews, publicity announcements, and reviews by and addressed to critics, private letters, and other authorial and editorial discourse. Since publicity announcements and interviews with the authors of the poems used in *Nocturne* are virtually non-existent, what are relevant to this study are reviews by critics and other authorial and editorial discourse.

Much has been written about all four of these poems, especially about how they have been influenced by and how similar they are to other works[99]. I have mentioned that the Dekker poem was indirectly influenced by Shakespearean works, and that the three other poems, *The Wanderings of Cain*, "The Kraken", and *Prometheus Unbound*, have often been

[99] How these poems relate to each other and to other poems will be discussed later in this chapter.

related to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Inferno*. Furthermore, it has been said that Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, specifically "On a Poet's Lips I Slept", was also influenced by Shakespeare's play *The Tempest.* A number of theorists and critics have analyzed and interpreted the content and meaning of the poems, and most will agree that all of the poems have something to do with the night or dreams, or a dream state. The Shelley excerpt is about someone, or something falling asleep on the lips of a poet; "The Kraken" resembles a nightmare; in the Coleridge fragment, a young boy plucks fruits by moonlight; and in the "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" the activities described all happen at night.

As one can see, a paratextual analysis not only sheds some light on how the poems are related to each other, but also gives the reader some background information about how the poems came to be, the latter of which Genette calls autographic detail.

Metatextuality is Genette's third transtextual category and it refers to both explicit and implicit references of one text to another text. If one looks at each of the four texts being examined in this study, one will quickly realize that there are no explicit references from one text to another. Furthermore, if one tries to forge implicit relationships, then one will have a difficult time doing so because the texts simply do not reference one another. They do, however, refer to other texts, as has been mentioned and will be further explored in the next section.

The next category, hypertextuality, according to Genette is anything that shows a relationship between a text B and an earlier text A, or genre on which it is based, and which it transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends (including parody, spoof, sequel, translation). Since there are no earlier versions of any of the texts being examined, I suppose that there is no self-expurgation (as defined in the previous chapter). Similarly, there are also no excisions or reductions that have been made to any of the texts. If hypertextuality is to be found, it will be in relationships discovered between these texts or to other texts written earlier.

Looked at chronologically, the Dekker text comes first (1602), followed by *The Wanderings of Cain* (1798), *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), and finally "The Kraken" (1830). Even looked at chronologically, "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" does not serve as a hypotext for the other three texts. The same can be said of "The Wanderings of Cain". Likewise, "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" does not serve as a hypotext for Tennyson's "The Kraken". So, is there a hypotext for any of these texts? Of course, the answer is yes, however the hypotexts to which the poems are related have nothing to do with the song cycle.

It has already been mentioned that Shelley's inspiration for *Prometheus Unbound* came from *Æ*schylus. Likewise, the *Örvar-Odds saga* can be considered as one of the hypotexts for "The Kraken", but the Bible can also be considered as a hypotext for "The Kraken", as well as for both Prometheus *Unbound* and "The Wanderings of Cain" as has been previously shown.

While it is difficult to ascertain a hypotext for the poem "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting", one can say that it is similar to other poems that deal with nightingales. Many poets choose the nightingale as a symbol because of its creative and seemingly spontaneous song, as well as its association with people in love. This is the case in Dekker's poem. The nightingale breaks into song and Lazarillo, who sings it, relates what happens as a result. Another example of the nightingale in poetry can be found in "Sonnet 102"[100], where Shakespeare compares love poetry to the song of the nightingale (Philomel):

> Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
> When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
> As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
> And stops his pipe in growth of riper days (lines 5 – 8)

Philomel is the classical name for the nightingale and comes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Ovid's work, Philomela was on her way to visit her sister, Procne, but en route, was abducted by her sister's husband, Tereus, King of Thrace, taken into a wood and

[100] The text is in the appendix.

raped. So that she would not be able to tell anyone what he did to her, Tereus cut Philomela's tongue out and imprisoned her in a remote forest dwelling. During her imprisonment, Philomela weaves a tapestry which depicts what happened to her. She sent the tapestry to Procne, who, upon seeing it, sets her sister free. Enraged, Procne and Philomela return to Thrace and forge a plan to punish Tereus. They kill Tereus' son, Itys, and serve him to his father in a stew. When he learns what Procne and Philomela have done, Tereus attacks them with an axe. Having seen enough, Zeus then intervenes and turns them all into birds: Tereus into a hoopoe, Procne into a nightingale, and Philomela into a swallow. Later poets alter the ending slightly, with Procne being turned into the swallow and Philomela into the nightingale. This is the version that is used most often in literature when Philomela is mentioned (cf. McKusick 34).

McKusick claims that in the Classical literary tradition, the nightingale is associated with Philomela and the burden of her song, the loss of her voice, and the betrayal by someone whom she trusted. Thus, the 'Philomel moment' is when the theme of loss merges with that of voice so that the lost voice becomes the subject, or moving force, of a poetic song (cf. McKusick 35).

McKusick also points out that the nightingale's song is not generic, but individual, and can change from day to day, or from moment to moment. This phenomenon is what makes the nightingale so appealing. "[A]s a sentient creature, the nightingale is active in the moment of creation, and it manifests poetic imagination by varying its song to fit different moods and circumstances" (McKusick 35). The nightingale is said to have the power to evoke profound feelings of love, longing, sadness, and despair in not only those who hear its song, but also in the poet and the reader; it invites its listener to explore something greater than the merely human. However, some poets suggest that it can also be dangerous in its allurement (cf. McKusick 35). According to Jeni Williams, "in ancient Greek, the word *aedon* means nightingale, poet and poetry – these senses are completely interchangeable and can all be

present at once" (21). Therefore, it is common for the literary nightingale also to refer to the poet.

Thus, we can see that the nightingale has a long literary history going back to ancient Greece. Any number of poems, then, dealing with this subject could be considered as hypotexts. One such poem, entitled "When the Nightingale Sings"[101], stems from Medieval England and speaks of love a young man has for a maiden. Through these examples, one can see that Dekker's poem continues the tradition of using the nightingale in poetry and song.

The last transtextual category Genette discusses is architextuality, which, as previously mentioned, places a text into a genre or genres. Thus, architextuality is all of the general or transcendent categories – types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres – from which each singular text emerges (cf. Genette 9).

Prometheus Unbound is a four-act closet drama – in other words, a play not intended for the stage, but rather to be read alone or, sometimes, aloud in a small group. Closet dramas typically contain little action, but usually communicate some philosophical message, which is the case with *Prometheus Unbound*. "The Kraken" is written in iambic pentameter, *The Wanderings of Cain* is a combination of verse and prose (the part used by Britten is verse), and "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" is written in couplet form. Each poem has a different form, but it has been pointed out that there are a number of similarities between the texts, and especially with other texts.

In addition, three of the poems belong to the Romantic era: "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" (early Romantic); "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" and "The Kraken" (late Romantic). "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" is not a Romantic poem, but it has Romantic elements. These elements include the love of nature, or just simply nature, which is present in each poem, imagination (the primary faculty for creating all art), symbolism and myth (*Prometheus Bound*, *Örvar-Odds saga*, Cain and Abel (one could call it a biblical myth), and

[101] The text is in the appendix.

Metamorphoses), first-person lyric poetry where the poetic speaker loses persona and becomes more or less the direct person of the poet, the Romantic hero (Prometheus and Cain), the everyday, and the exotic (the supernatural as in "The Kraken").

Having completed the analysis with regards to Genette's notion of transtextuality, the analysis now moves to Porter, where it will become clearer how the texts are related to each other, and what it is that binds them.

An Iterable Analysis

In this section of the textual analysis, I will use Porter's concept of iterability, which he says refers to the repetition of certain textual fragments and to citation in its broadest sense. Thus, citation includes not only explicit allusions, references, and quotations within a discourse, but also the sources and influences that are not mentioned, as well as clichés, phrases in the air, and traditions. It is important to remember that this analysis examines how the texts function within a discourse, and here the discourse is the song cycle created by Britten.

To begin with, I consider similarities and differences that appear in the poems. Since there are fewer of them, the differences will be discussed first: titles, poetic voice, and setting. When one reads the title of the Shelley poem, "On a Poet's Lips I Slept", one immediately thinks of the night. However, the action in the dream takes place during the day which becomes clear through the lines "He will watch from dawn till gloom / The lake-reflected sun illume / The yellow bees in ivy-bloom". The Shelley poem also indicates that someone or something sleeps on the lips of a poet, a rather strange thought, but at the same time alluding to the Romantic. The title of the Coleridge fragment, "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves", suggests that someone or something is covered with leaves. The titles of the other two poems have already been discussed.

When looking at the voice of the poetry, one discovers that the Shelley poem is the only one written with the lyrical "I", in this case represented by the Fourth Spirit. Two poems employ the use of a narrator – "The Kraken" and "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" – while the Dekker poem does not. The moods of the poems are distinctly different. The Shelley poem exhibits a mood of love and serenity, the Tennyson poem one of fear and anxiety, the Coleridge poem exhibits both peace and loneliness, and the Dekker poem a sense of unsettledness, or noisiness.

Another difference between the poems is setting. In the dream world of the Shelley poem, the action takes place next to a lake, and since the ivy is blooming, it must be a warm day in late summer or in early fall. The action in "The Kraken" dream world takes place on a stormy sea. The Coleridge poem is set in a meadow or a wood where fruit and flowers are allowed to grow wild, and the Dekker poem is set in a city or a village where a bell rings out the hour.

Having discussed the differences, the analysis will turn now to the similarities: structure, language, and thematic material. In each poem, a rhyme scheme is employed, although the schemes differ somewhat. Shelley uses two different schemes. All of the lines in the poem are trochee tetrameter[102]; however, the fifteen lines are in tercet[103] form, where the

[102] A trochee tetrameter is rhythm used in poetry. A trochee is a long or stressed syllable, which is followed by a short, or an unstressed syllable. Tetra means four, so in a trochee tetrameter there are four trochees per line. Because English is inherently iambic (the exact opposite of a trochee), the trochee tetrameter sometimes sounds rather artificial. One of the most famous examples of this can be found in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*. In the excerpt below, the trochees have been printed in bold.

> **By** the **shores** of **Git**che **Gu**mee,
> **By** the **shi**ning **Big**-Sea-**Wa**ter,
> **Stood** the **wig**wam **of** No**kom**is,
> **Daugh**ter **of** the **Moon**, No**kom**is.
> **Dark** be**hind** it **rose** the **fo**rest,
> **Rose** the **black** and **gloo**my **pine**-trees,
> **Rose** the **firs** with **cones** up**on** them;
> **Bright** be**fore** it **beat** the **wa**ter,
> **Beat** the **clear** and **sun**ny **wa**ter,
> **Beat** the **shi**ning **Big**-Sea-**Wa**ter.

[103] Tercet form is simply three lines of poems that form either a stanza or a complete poem. Here is an example from Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind".

first nine lines and the last three lines all have the same end rhyme. The penultimate tercet of the poem, however, possesses a different rhyming scheme than do the first nine lines: abb.

Like the Shelly poem, "The Kraken" also has 15 lines, but it is written in iambic pentameter[104]. Tennyson employs a number of different rhyming schemes. The poem begins with a cross rhyme (abab), and continues with an enclosed rhyme (abba). The last seven lines are problematic, however. The ninth line has none with which it rhymes and seems to stand alone. The remaining six lines all have a corresponding line to which they rhyme, but Tennyson chooses not use the traditional scheme of a tail rhyme, which would be abcabc, and instead uses abccab, a conscious break with poetic tradition.

The Coleridge poem, like the Shelley poem, is written in tetrameter, with the exception of the last line, which is written in iambic pentameter. The poem consists of 17 lines and four quatrains[105], and each quatrain has a different scheme: abcb, abab, aabb, and abaa respectively.

The last poem, from *Blurt, Master Constable*, consists of 10 lines, written in five rhyming couplets[106], all of which are written in tetrameter.

Turning to the language, one notices that, even though 225 years separate the first poem from the last, the language in each poem and excerpt Britten chose for this work is

---

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow.

[104] This is the most common type of meter found in poetry written in the English language. In iambic pentameter, the rhythm that the words establish in a line is measured in small groups of syllables called feet. The word iambic refers to the type of foot that is used, known as the iamb, which in English is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. The word pentameter means that one line contains five of these feet.

[105] A quatrain is the term used to indicate a stanza that consists of four lines. Usually the end of the first line rhymes with end of the third, and the end of the second line rhymes with the end of the third (abab). This can, however, be varied, as Coleridge does with the poem analyzed in this study.

[106] A couplet is a literary device that has two successive rhyming lines in a verse and has the same meter to form a complete thought. It is marked by a usual rhythm, rhyme scheme and incorporation of specific utterances. It could an independent poem, or could be a part of other poems. If a couplet has the ability to stand apart from the rest of the poem, it is independent and referred to as a closed couplet. A couplet which does not yield a proper meaning alone is called an open couplet.

astonishingly similar. Aside from a few words like ‘aëreal’ (‘imaginary’ – late 16th century), ‘illume’ (‘illuminate’, late middle English) ‘encinctured’ (‘encircled’, ‘enclosed’ – late 16th century), ‘grot’ (a form of the word ‘grotto’ meaning cave – early 17th century), and the word ‘ting’ (a clear sharp ringing – early 17th century) (cf. Harper), which are no longer in use, the language is quite modern. Although Dekker can linguistically be placed in the Early Modern English era, his language does not differ greatly from that of Shelley, Tennyson, and Coleridge, who can be firmly placed in the Modern English era.

Looking at the poems, one finds two common themes: night and dreams. In all the poems, the action takes place at night or at dusk. Although night is not mentioned in the Shelley poem, it is alluded to by the activity of sleeping. The approaching night is alluded to in Tennyson’s poem as the “faintest sunlights flee / About his shadowy sides” (lines 4 – 5). While the Shelley and Tennyson poems only allude to the night, the Coleridge and Dekker poems are explicit about when the action takes place. Coleridge states outright that the night is lovelier than the day and Dekker alludes to the beauty of the night through the song of the nightingale, in which most of the other animals mentioned in the poem take part.

The Shelley poem explicitly mentions dreams, as does Tennyson’s, but unlike the Shelley poem, “The Kraken” conjures up frightful images and sea monsters. The word ‘dream’ is never mentioned in the Tennyson poem, but it is safe to assume that it is a ‘bad’ dream – in other words, a nightmare. Whereas the dream states in the Shelley and Tennyson poems are rather obvious, the dream states in the Coleridge and Dekker poems are somewhat obscure and require a certain amount of imagination to interpret.

In “Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves”, Coleridge describes the boy thus “But who that beauteous Boy beguiled, / That beauteous Boy to linger here?” (lines 13 – 14) According to the *Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary*, ‘beguile’ means “to charm or to enchant someone, often in a deceptive way”. The boy is evidently in some sort of altered state – a trance or a dream-like state – and in this trance he has no control over his actions.

Identifying the dream state in the Dekker poem is difficult because the poem has been taken out of its original context, but when it is put back into its context in the play, it becomes clear that Lazarillo is in a dream state[107]. He appears in his nightgown and slippers. He sings songs. He has a conversation with the devil and "dances" with him. However, Lazarillo longs to see his beloved. Believing he will not see her, he wishes to fall asleep. In his confusion, he comes to think he is in hell and hopes for release. The song "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" is just a response to the dream he had.

It is interesting to note that three of the poems come from larger works. One can only surmise why Britten chose these particular excerpts, which is also rather dangerous. What can be done, however, is to briefly look at the poems in the context from which they came.

"On a Poet's Lips I Slept" is the song of the Fourth Spirit in Act I of *Prometheus Unbound*. There are six spirits in all, each singing a song on a different subject to Prometheus. The first four songs relate news of men on earth who are fighting evil.

> The first spirit, of heroism, speaks of those who are fighting for freedom. The second spirit, of altruism, refers to the survivor of a shipwreck. The third spirit, of wisdom, describes a sage who had once made a stir in the world. The fourth lyric is devoted to the Poet … The last two spirits have as their theme Love, with its 'shadows' Pain and Ruin. The sixth spirit's song is modeled on a Homeric image elaborated by Agathon in the Symposium.
>
> These songs comfort Prometheus, but the mention of Love, only saddens him by awaking memories of his own beloved, Asia, who lives among the fertile valleys of the 'Indian Caucasus'. (King-Hele 175 – 176)

Britten chose to shorten the Fourth Spirit song most likely because the last two lines "One of these awakened me / And I sped to succour thee" (lines 750 and 751) form a couplet that link the song to the dramatic content that follows (cf. Evans 371), clearly moving away from the theme of night and dreams.

"Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" is a fragment from the unfinished work *The Wanderings of Cain*. As mentioned earlier, this started off as a collaborative effort between Coleridge and Wordsworth, but Wordsworth never contributed to the project. Instead, many

[107] The scene in question has been included in the appendix.

scholars believe that Coleridge used the piece to develop themes that would later appear in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. *The Wanderings of Cain* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* are related thematically. They both share concerns with the problem of evil, redemption, and the supernatural. The protagonists in both works are presented as manifestations of the mythical Wandering Jew. The main theme of each work is the problem of sacrifice, and both texts depict an image of blood spilled from the arm.

Concerning *Christabel*, the narrative plot reflects that of the *Cain* fragments: outside the city, a disguised spirit tempts the protagonist into committing a terrible sin. This supernatural being holds power over the protagonist by claiming to be an acquaintance of the protagonist's dead relatives (Christabel's mother and Cain's brother). Again, thematic similarity is joined by a specific image that appears in both poems. A bird (a dove in *Christabel* and a vulture in *The Wanderings of Cain*) is caught in the coils of a snake.

Most of the poem is set in prose, but "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" and another fragment, "The Child is Born, The Child must Die", are the only two fragments that Coleridge set in verse. The inherent lyrical quality of the "Encinctured" fragment, naturally lends itself to song.

The third poem to come from a larger work is "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting", from *Blurt, Master Constable,* which will be discussed more in detail later.

Another similarity that exists here is that two of the poems are songs in their original contexts: "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" sung by the Fourth Spirit as mentioned earlier, and "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" sung by Lazarillo in Act IV of Dekker's play.

Having discussed how the poems lend themselves to an iterable analysis, I will turn to my presuppositions.

Presuppositions

Based on the information presented in the last two sections, I presuppose that the texts together suggest altered states or a psychological journey through the mind. This is the common theme that unifies the texts in *Nocturne*, and this is the common theme of *Nocturne*'s discourse community.

Shelley says in his preface that the imagery used "will be found in many instances to have been drawn from operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed" (qtd. in Reiman and Fraistat 207). In his book *Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of a Vision*, Carlos Baker says that one should think of *Prometheus Unbound* not in terms of objective, dramatic representation, but rather in terms of the philosophical meaning of the play. Then, Prometheus is not a character, but instead an image of the mind of man, i.e. the human mind seen in its universal aspects (cf. Baker 112). At the beginning of the story, we find Prometheus bound to a rock from which he, during the course of the play, is freed. Baker says

> [t]he essential meaning is fairly simple: the removal of that repressive force which now manacles and tortures the human mind would not only provide an opportunity for the rebirth of the power of love in that mind, but would also enable man to realize his tremendous potential of intellectual might and spiritual pleasure … which has for so long been stifled by fear, hate, selfishness, and despair. The conditional mood of this statement is quite intentional: Shelley is not suggesting that these things have happened, but only that they ought to happen. The *Prometheus* is one of those 'dreams of what ought to be or may be' in the distant future. (113)

Baker states that Shelley's vision of the mind of man in the Saturnian Age was undeveloped, and that man became simpleminded. However, in the following age, the Age of Prometheus, man gained knowledge and power, but at the same time desires, worries, and idling, evil shadows began to surface, bringing about war and ruining the human mind. Then, to help alleviate some of these shortcomings, man's mind developed the creative arts and the useful

sciences. To this end, the mind continually tried to rid itself of those things which had bound it to darkness (cf. Baker 113).

Since Prometheus is seen as 'the human mind', I conclude that the action that occurs in the song of the Fourth Spirit takes place in the human mind. Thus, in this particular song, Prometheus represents the poetic man.

"On a Poet's Lips I Slept" relates a pleasant dream, one in which images of serenity abound. When the Fourth Spirit says that it falls asleep on the poet's lips, the journey within the mind begins. The poet's lips are where thoughts are made manifest, and by falling asleep on them, the Spirit actually witnesses how the poet puts these thoughts together. The Spirit actually sees the "aëreal kisses / Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses" (line 742 – 743). William H. Hildebrand, in his essay "A Look at the Third and Fourth Spirit Songs: *Prometheus Unbound I*", says that the aëreal kisses, or the 'Imaginative Eros', as he calls them, must be a reference to the poet's words for they are just abstract thoughts that exist in the mind until the poet puts them together into a form – one that, after it is born, becomes immortal (cf. 92). Considering that what Baker says is that the arts were developed to help alleviate man's shortcomings, the immortal words of the poet help to free man from his chains that have bound him to darkness, or in other words, ignorance. This was most likely why Britten put special emphasis on the poet's thoughts.

Britten makes it clear in the second poem, however, that the poet's mind is not always at ease, and that his thoughts are sometimes frightful and disquieting (the byproduct of man developing knowledge and power). In the second poem, the landscape of the mind changes dramatically. Tennyson takes the reader to a part of the mind where thoughts exist, but are latent, or one could say, subdued. Looking at this poem in closer detail, one can see some autobiographical elements in it. According to Ryals, "The Kraken" is a regressive poem.

> [T]he lavish descriptions of the undersea depths with their sponges, polypi, and seaworms suggests a psychological interpretation.

> In his discussion of progression and regression Jung says that at certain times there comes a damming up of energy, of libido, and that when this happens neurotic symptoms may be observed. In the patients he has studied he has found repressed contents of the mind to appear. "Slime out of the depths" is the term by which he characterizes such contents, using the same symbolism to be found in the poem under consideration. "The Kraken" is a short poem, but it seems to be part of the myth of the night journey under the sea that Jung has described as the rebirth archetype. At any rate, the images of the poem seem to be a presentation of the unconscious contents of the poet's mind activated through regression. (66)

Ryals says that the poems contained in *Tennyson's Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, of which "The Kraken" is a part, are the result of Tennyson's explorations into the realm of the mind. He goes on to say that Tennyson often compared

> his own concepts and emotions against the forces of a hostile world. As he continued to examine the themes …, the predominant tone of the volume is, therefore, doubt and vacillation … Feeling increasingly stronger the pull of the world after having arrived at Cambridge, Tennyson retreated from the demands of reality by means of dreams and momentary loss of consciousness. (40)

"The Kraken" is one poem that reflects these thoughts. Going a step further to connect it to the previous poems discussed, when spoken, these thoughts also become immortal and express anxiety of dangers seen and unseen, and the fear of the known and unknown. Thus, "The Kraken" depicts another psychological state – a nightmare. However, the narrator says that this creature will not always remain asleep, but that a fire will force it from its slumber to the surface where it will be destroyed (cf. lines 13 – 15). Christopher Nield, writing for the *Epoch Times*, says the following:

> … the Kraken also resembles the Biblical Leviathan, a 'dragon in the sea' that some Christians see as another guise of Satan, who will only be defeated at the end of time. Indeed, at the poem's astonishing climax, we suddenly fast-forward from prehistoric stasis to a vision of the 'latter fire' or Apocalypse.
>
> Tennyson alludes to two passages from the book of Revelations: one that describes the sun scorching the face of the earth; and the other, a nightmarish beast, representing blasphemy, rising up out of the sea. It's the final battle. Men and angels – in other words, all of creation – have gathered to watch the Kraken receive his knockout blow from God. (n. pag.)

Only when the kraken has been destroyed, will the nightmare end. Only then will the poet's mind be at ease. Until that time, what exists in the subconscious will always be a threat to the

poet. In order for the mind not to be consumed with fear, gloom, and anxiety, the creature that is the beast will have to, one day, be destroyed.

The journey through the mind continues with the next poem, “Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves”. According to the Bible, Cain was the eldest son of Adam and Eve. Once, Cain and his younger brother Abel made a sacrifice to God, but for some unknown reason God favored Abel’s sacrifice over Cain’s. Up to this point, Cain was innocent and pure. However, when God refused Cain’s sacrifice, he became angry with God. God asked Cain why and gave him the chance to reflect on his anger and to change his attitude, telling Cain that if he did not, he would be in jeopardy of committing some heinous crime. Cain did not change his attitude and, deceived by his jealous thoughts, killed his brother. By committing this crime, Cain lost his innocence. He was marked and banished – forced to wander the earth for the rest of his days.

The relationship to the “boy” in Britten’s *Nocturne* can be made by drawing a few parallels. In the song cycle, the boy is Cain, who is portrayed wandering naked through the woods, lost and plucking fruit. The boy finds himself under a lovely moon, and near flowers growing together on bushes and trees. The scene is romantic, yet false. The boy, like the biblical Cain, has lost his innocence and must cover his shame with the night. He is alone and has no mother. As a result, he, like his thoughts, must wander until his innocence can be regained.

That the boy has no mother is a reflection of Coleridge’s own insecurities and the problems he had in his own life, particularly with his mother. In his book, *Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel*, Norman Fruman elaborates on Coleridge’s boyhood, which had lasting impressions on him. The young Coleridge seems to have been surrounded by death. He was the youngest of 10 children born by his father’s second wife and of his siblings, six died before he reached his 20th birthday. Two weeks before his ninth birthday, his father died, at which point, he was taken from his familiar surroundings and taken to Christ’s Hospital, a

charity school in London. Here, he developed his hatred for his mother. In the entire time he was at the school, he received only one visit from his mother and none from any other member of his family. He made very few visits to his home during this time, and when he did, the visits were very brief.

> Most of what we know about Coleridge's formative years derives from the five famous 'autobiographical letters' he wrote to his 'best friend' at that time, Thomas Poole, between February 1797 and February 1798. Coleridge was then twenty-five years old. The first two letters deal with genealogy and one or two obviously misty reminiscences of the first three years of his life. The third letter, written some seven months later, describes his years between three and six, and the psychological portrait that begins to emerge is already a destructive one.
>
> "My Father was very fond of me," he writes, "and I was my mother's darling." But otherwise, at least in his recollections, he is surrounded by hostility. Molly the family servant, "hated me"; Frank, an older brother, "hated me"; "Frank had a violent love of beating me"; "from Molly…I received only thumps & ill names.
>
> So I became fretful, & timorous, & a tell-tale - & the School-boys drove me from play, & were always tormenting me - & hence I took no pleasure in boyish sports – but read incessantly … and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity – and I was fretful, and inordinately passionate, and as I could not play at any thing, and was slothful, I was despised & hated by the boys." (Fruman 21)

Even though Coleridge wrote fondly of his mother in this passage, he later felt abandoned by her. His feeling of abandonment led him to believe he was unloved, and these feelings later turned to hatred. Coleridge often found himself in states of emotional crises and during one of these moments he wrote, "No one on earth has ever LOVED me" (qtd. in Fruman 25). If we again look at "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" against this background information, then one could conclude that the poem is somewhat autobiographical.

Keeping in line with this interpretation, one could very well say that Coleridge, himself, is Cain, and as Cain lost his innocence, so did Coleridge, which most likely happened when Coleridge's father died and he was forced to face the harsh realities of life on his own without any help or the protective environment of his family.

I would like to focus for a moment on the boy's wandering. It is well known that Coleridge had deep psychological problems stemming from his youth that were to haunt him throughout his life. We could look at the boy's wandering as a parallel to the mind, for the mind can also wander. Focusing then on this aspect, the poem then continues what I call, 'The

Journey through the Mind'. According to Jonathan Smallwood and Jonathan W. Schooler in their essay "The Restless Mind", one reason the mind wanders is that it tries to resolve problems in everyday life. "When mind wandering occurs … individuals are likely to be processing their current concerns" (954). In "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves", the boy could also represent the part of the mind that is helpless. Here, the poet's thoughts have been hijacked rendering him helpless. They are alone, unable to join other thoughts. They have no one to give them life, no one to make them immortal. Here, the mind has become a beautiful illusion, a prison created by loss of purpose. Only when the innocence has been recaptured, and the poet is once again 'pure', will he be able to create things immortal.

The last poem to be examined is Dekker's "The Midnight Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting". Britten does not use all this material for his song cycle, but focuses on the poet's disorientation with the song. The poet (or the persona of the poet) does not know what to make of the situation in which he finds himself. He is unable to control or organize his thoughts. The poet, in this song has not found the innocence he lost in the last song, thus he has become crippled and is no longer capable of creating. He is lost in the darkness of his mind. The only things the poet hears are the sounds of the night.

Unfortunately, not very much is known about Dekker. Most scholars place his birth in London, sometime before 1570, but there is no information available about his familial relations or about his education. His name first appears as the author of a work for Henslowe's theater troop in 1570. Even though he wrote more that forty plays, not very many have survived. He is best known for *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) and *The Honest Whore* (1604). Despite his plays being popular at the time, Dekker was chronically in debt and because of his debts, was imprisoned for a number of years.

Dekker's plays encompass a number of fields including history, English chronicles, and everyday London life. He, like other playwrights of his day, is known for using a wide range of stories and history in his works. He also created a variety of characters from both the

real and supernatural worlds. Unfortunately, the question of authorship makes it difficult to learn more about *Blurt, Master Constable* and the circumstances of how it came into being.

Turning back to the cycle overall, the question remains: How does the poet (humankind) progress through the rest of the song cycle? Does he regain his lost innocence and emerge from the dark depths of his mind? Will he be able to take up his work again and turn his thoughts into words immortal? The premise of a journey through the mind has been established, but how that journey continues must wait to be explored in a subsequent study.

The intertextual analysis has shown how the poems relate to other poems that precede them or that stem from the same periods in which they were created. The analysis has also shown how the poems relate to each other and how they unite to form a discourse community. Having established these connections, I will now turn to the music and how it interacts with the poetry. Does the discourse community still exist? Does the listener hear things the reader cannot? These and other questions will be answered later. The next chapter will deal with intermedial theories and how these theories will be implemented for the musical analysis.

6. Intermedial Theories

The two previous chapters dealt with intertextuality and its application to analyze the text of Britten's *Nocturne.* This chapter, and the next, will deal with the subject of intermediality. To begin with, like the term intertextuality, the term intermediality is also difficult to define because so many have defined it according to their purposes, which often leads to confusion as to what intermediality really is. Irina Rajewsky elaborates on this point in her essay "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality".

> From its beginnings, 'intermediality' has served as an umbrella-term. A variety of critical approaches make use of the concept, the specific object of these approaches is each time defined differently, and each time intermediality is associated with different attributes and delimitations. The specific objectives pursued by different disciplines (e.g. media studies, literary studies, sociology, film studies, art history) in conducting intermedial research vary considerably. In addition, a host of related terms has surfaced in the discourse about intermediality which are themselves defined and used in a variety of ways (e.g. multimediality, plurimediality, crossmediality, infra-mediality, media-convergence, media-integration, media-fusion, hybridization, and so forth). More recently, researchers have begun to formally specify their particular conception of intermediality through such epithets as transformational, discursive, synthetic, formal, transmedial, ontological, or genealogical intermediality, primary and secondary intermediality, or so-called intermedial figuration.
>
> The current state of affairs, then, is a proliferation of heterogeneous conceptions of intermediality and heterogeneous ways in which the term is used. (44)

From the above quote it is easy to see how one can become confused when using the term intermediality. In essence, scholars have, and must, adapt the term for their specific use(s). However, this can lead to problems. On the one hand, Werner Wolf warns that one can be too broad with the term "so that even a pair of glasses or a bicycle that might be used on stage as 'extensions of the actors' would become individual media" ("(Inter)mediality" n. pag.). Given this broad sense, then practically anything used in combination with another text or object could be considered to have an intermedial relationship. On the other hand, there are those who risk defining the term too narrowly. Hans Hiebel, for example, defines media as materialistic or energetic (electrical, electronic, opto-electrical) carriers and transmitters of

data, or rather, units of information (qtd. in Wolf, *Musicalization* 35).[108] With such a definition, only technical or institutional forms of communication could be thought of as having medial qualities.

In searching for a definition that is neither too broad nor too narrow, Wolf suggests a definition put forth by the literary scholar and critic Marie-Laure Ryan:

> Medium, as used in literary and intermediality studies, is a conventionally and culturally distinct means of communication, specified not only by particular technical or institutional channels (or one channel) but primarily by the use of one or more semiotic systems in the public transmission of [its] contents that include, but are not restricted to referential "messages". Generally, media "make … a difference as to what kind of … content can be evoked …, how these contents are presented …, and how they are experienced." (qtd. in "Relevance" 19)

In order for this definition to have relevance to the present study, one must grasp what poetic and musical conventions are and how they are used to communicate. One must also accept that poetry and music are cultural entities. Lastly, one must comprehend the notion of semiotic systems and how such systems can be applied to poetry and music.

Before I come to my own definition of intermediality, which is what is necessary for anyone wishing to use the term, let me first explore some of the many theories used to describe it. One thing is clear, however: in order to understand the term intermediality, one must first understand the term medium.

Poetry as a Medium

According to Otto Knörrich, everyone knows what a poem is, but at the same time no one knows what a poem is (qtd. in Nünning and Nünning 47). Thus, poetry presents a paradox. What Knörrich means here is that everyone can inherently identify a poem, but almost no one

[108] „[M]aterielle oder energetische (elektrische, elektronische, opto-elektronische) Träger und Übermittler von Daten bzw. Informationseinheiten".

can define what one is. Most people would agree that poetry can be recognized by its conventions, which are realized in a number of different characteristics, elements, and forms.

These characteristics are: brevity (a reduction and compression of the subject-matter represented in the poem); subjectivity (which is expressed both in the attitude and perspective of the lyrical persona, and in the individual mode of linguistic expression and the theme of the poem); musicality and lyricism, structural and phonological complexity, morphological and syntactical complexity, deviations from everyday language, increased artificiality, and increased aesthetic self-referentiality (cf. Nünning and Nünning 47 – 52).

Poetic elements are prosody, rhyme, alliteration, assonance and consonance, diction, and form. Prosody refers to meter, rhythm, and poetic intonation. Rhyme, alliteration, assonance (the use of similar vowel sounds within a word rather than similar sounds at the beginnings or ends of words), and consonance (where a consonant sound is repeated throughout a sentence without putting the sound only at the front of a word) together are used to create repetitive sound patterns. Diction refers to the manner in which the language is used, including its sound, its underlying meanings, and its interaction with both sound and form. Form is realized in lines, stanzas, and visual presentations.

There are many poetic genres[109], which include the ballad (originally a British form), the haiku and tanka (Japanese forms of unrhymed poetry, the former of which has been adopted into other languages), the ode (found in cultures influenced by the Greeks and Romans), the sonnet (common in English and Italian poetry), and the villanelle (found in English-language poetry since the 19th century). Poetry can also be divided into different modes such as the satiric, ironic, comic, and pastoral. These poetic genres and modes are used to infer, and communicate differential interpretations of words, or to emit emotional or even

[109] Named here are just a few of the many types of poetry genres that exist. For a more complete listing and descriptions and examples thereof, *A Companion To Poetic Genre* (edited by Erik Martiny, 2012) is an invaluable source.

logical responses. Thus, poetry meets the first criterion Ryan lists for media: it is a distinct means of communication that adheres to the conventions of the culture in which it exists.

In semiotics, a culture is comprised of the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life. As seen in the preceding paragraphs, specific poetic forms can be expressions of certain cultures. Historically, these poetic forms are bound to the cultures in which they were invented, and help the members of their cultures to make sense of their daily lives. However, when one culture interacts with another, ideas, customs, mores, and folkways are exchanged. In the case of poetry[110], it is often introduced to, or adopted by, another culture. Two examples of such an exchange are the haiku and the ode. The haiku has its origins in Japanese culture, but it has been adopted into English-language poetry. The ode, which was originally Greek, was adopted by the Romans after the latter conquered the former, and then was spread throughout the Roman Empire. Thus, the second criterion for a poetic medium has been fulfilled.

The next criterion Ryan mentions for a medium is that the medium must make use of one or more semiotic systems in the public transmission of its contents. According to Michèle Anstey and Geoff Bull, there are five types of semiotic systems:

> 1. Linguistic: comprising aspects such as vocabulary, generic structure and the grammar of oral and written language
> 2. Visual: comprising aspects such as colour, vectors and viewpoint in still and moving images
> 3. Audio: comprising aspects such as volume, pitch and rhythm of music and sound effects
> 4. Gestural: comprising aspects such as movement, speed, and stillness in facial expression and body language
> 5. Spatial: comprising aspects such as proximity, direction, position of layout and organisation of objects in space. (par. 6)

The system to which poetry belongs is the first for it is comprised of the vocabulary and the grammar of the language[111] and culture in which it was created, and its structure reflects the

[110] Historically the different forms of poetry were distinctly associated with particular cultures.
[111] I am not saying here that language is not a medium. It is. Poetry is a specialized type of language that communicates on the aesthetic level.

culture from which it stems. Poetry, in turn, gives new meaning to things[112] (signs) and it communicates that meaning to someone else.

Using Ryan's definition, I have shown how poetry can be classified as a medium: it is a conventionally and culturally distinct form of communication. This form of communication is specified by particular technical or institutional channels (in this case the conventions dictated by the culture in which it exists), and by the use of a linguistic semiotic system to publicly transmit its contents. Thus, poetry is a medium because it has the ability to communicate: it influences what kind of content can be evoked (emotional responses, for example), how this content is presented (its various forms), and how it is experienced (which can be culture specific). Furthermore, poetry exists in different genres, such as the ballad, the elegy, or the epic[113]. Each of these genres has the ability to communicate, but they do so in different ways.

It becomes evident then, that the texts in *Nocturne* can be considered part of a distinct medium – poetry. Having established that poetry is a medium, the focus will now turn to music.

Music as a Medium

> Music is always more than music. Music transcends itself, that is, if one considers as falling within the music the fields of sounding tones, written notes, performances, concerts, and CDs. Music is always intermusical. Music reacts to other music(s), incorporates them, transforms them, [and] gives them other meanings. All music continually refers to other already produced music. Therefore, every [kind of] music can

[112] Another term for this is defamiliarization or estrangement, which is the poetic technique of taking something familiar and presenting it to an audience in a way that is strange or unfamiliar resulting in a renewed perception that creates a fresh awareness for the person reading or listening to poetry (cf. Pourjafari 200).

[113] There are many different genres of poetry. These are just three of them. The ballad is called as such because it was originally intended to be sung. It is usually a narrative that has a very simple metrical pattern – quatrains, also referred to as stanzas, made of up four lines. The elegy (in musical terms, a requiem) is a poem of mourning, and reflects the transition from life to death. The epic poem is a very long narrative broken up into stanzas. The epic poem can be divided into many subcategories that are culture or topic specific.

> be described as a network, a fabric, a texture. In addition, music is always in one way or another in a proportional relationship with the concept of music: it is involved in a dialogue with the prevailing definitions of music, often affirmative but sometimes protesting and meddling. Concrete music gives substance and content to the concept of music. But music is also connected with other, so-called extra-musical narratives: music is political, (un)ethical, philosophical, societal, religious, feminine or masculine, nationalistic, critical, or conformist. Music reacts to developments, gives its specific viewpoint, but also sets developments in motion. As such, it is always more than itself. (Cobussen n. pag.)

The preceding quote shows that music is similar to poetry in that it is influenced by other music. Music is similar to poetry in other aspects as well. Like poetry, music means different things to different people and how it is defined differs from culture to culture. Because music is inherently culture specific, there is no universal concept of what music is that can be applied to all cultures. Most people would agree that music, like poetry, can be recognized by its conventions, which are also realized through its characteristics, elements, and forms.

Simply put, music is characteristically the combination of sounds and silences. These characteristics are then combined with musical elements: pitch (which governs melody and harmony); rhythm (tempo, meter, and articulation); dynamics (volume); and aural qualities of timbre and texture.

Musical genres are most often identified with different historical periods. In western classical music (that of Europe and North America) these periods chronologically are referred to as Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and contemporary or modern[114]. Music developed differently in the rest of the world and can be recognized as Asian, African, biblical, and, in the Americas and Oceania, indigenous. Each period in western music, as well as music in the rest of the world, has distinct genres, which can be further divided into forms, which identify it with a particular period or people. For example, the Gregorian Chant is primarily associated with the Middle Ages. The sonata had its origins in the Baroque era, but

[114] Most people agree upon these six periods, but one could make a case for ancient music as being a category in its own right. Furthermore, each category can be divided into subcategories such as early and late Renaissance, early and late Baroque, early and late Romantic, and 20th and 21st century.

the Classical and Romantic sonatas are distinctly different and are representative of the eras in which they were developed. Starting in the 20th century, musical styles and genres within and across cultures began merging, so that today it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish the music of one culture from that of another.

Even though modern music tends to be a blurring and blending of cultural elements, it has become more culturally diverse than at any other period in history. This is easy to imagine when one thinks of Schlager (a popular musical form in German-speaking countries), gospel music (which is found primarily in African-American churches), gangsta rap (which is predominant in urban ghettoes), or classical music (listened to primarily by those belonging to the upper and middle classes). These are just a few of the myriad of different types of music that exist in different cultures[115] around the world. Thus, it is clear that music is not only conventional, but it is also cultural. Therefore, music has satisfied the first two criteria of Ryan's definition of medium.

To meet the third criterion, music must use one or more semiotic systems in the public transmission of its contents. According to the five types of semiotic systems identified by Anstey and Bull, music belongs to the third type mentioned – audio: As previously shown, music is the combination of volume, pitch, rhythm, and sound effects. The combination of these elements produces communication, a message that means something to the people who belong to the culture in which it was created. Music's ability to communicate is indisputable and many psychologists and musicologists have conducted studies to determine how and what it communicates. Juslin and Laukka state that

> it is possible to speculate that the origin of music is to be found in various cultural activities of the distant past, when the demarcation between vocal expression and music was not as clear as it is today. Vocal expression of discrete emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, and love probably became gradually meshed with vocal music that accompanied related cultural activities such as festivities, funerals, wars, and care giving. A number of authors have proposed that music served to harmonize the emotions of the social group and to create cohesion. (775)

[115] Culture here does not only refer to nationality, but also to socio-economic status and sub-cultures that exist within a larger culture such as Hispanic, gothic, punk, rave, drum and bass, and so on.

From the above quote, it is evident that many believe music to have distinct cultural functions, which, in turn, communicate meaning to the members of that culture. Furthermore, Spencer states that "vocal music, and hence instrumental music, is intimately related to vocal expression of emotions" (qtd. in Juslin and Laukka 770). One should also note that how people perceive these emotions is largely individual, which means that two people experiencing the same piece of music may have two entirely different emotional reactions to it. This phenomenon is not only due to socio-economic factors, but also due to how a musical piece is performed.

Using the Ryan definition, it has been shown that both poetry and music are media. However, the problem of coming up with a definition of the term intermediality and how it will be used for the present study must be resolved.

Toward a Definition of Intermediality

As mentioned earlier, whoever uses the concept of intermediality must first define it (cf. Rajewsky 45). Like with the terms intertextuality and medium, there is no consensus on a definition for intermediality.

One can see from Rajewsky's quote on page 132 that a number of concepts exist as to what intermediality is. As the field continues to expand, it becomes more and more essential that the term and its use be identified. For the present study, the typology put forth by Scher and expanded by Wolf will be examined, and from it, a concept identified with which the intermedial analysis of this study will be conducted.

According to Wolf, in the "broader sense 'intermediality' applies to any transgression of boundaries between conventionally distinct media of communication: such transgressions

cannot only occur within one work or semiotic complex but also as a consequence of relations or comparisons between different works or semiotic complexes" ("Intermediality Revisited" 17). I interpret this to mean that intermediality is the interaction of two or more different media. It does not matter what the media are, as long as they are not the same: text and film, art and dance, or in the case of this study, text and music. However, Wolf points out that the concept of intermediality can be divided into two categories extra- and intracompositional intermediality, and this is what I would like to discuss next as it is pertinent to this study, which will become clear.

Extracompositional intermediality refers to intermediality "that can be deduced from a comparison between certain works or signifying phenomena" ("Intermediality Revisited" 18). Wolf states that extracompositional intermediality can be divided into two categories: transmediality and intermedial transposition. Transmediality refers to phenomena that are not specific to any one media and therefore, can exist in more than one medium. In addition, Wolf says that transmedial phenomena can also build points of contact, or bridges, between different media. In certain instances, these bridges are employed to create intracompositional intermediality (cf. "Intermediality Revisited 18).

Transmediality is realized as "historical formal devices that occur in more than one medium, such as motivic repetition, thematic variation, or … narrativity, a feature which cannot be restricted to verbal narratives alone but which also informs opera and film and which can moreover be found in ballet, the visual arts and … to some degree … in instrumental music" (Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited" 18 – 19). Wolf goes on to say that another area of focus for transmedial researchers deals with the characteristic historical traits that exist in either the formal or the content level of media in certain periods. In addition to the two phenomena mentioned above, transmediality can also exist at the content level alone. Wolf gives as examples typical subject matters and themes such as generational or gender conflict, the different stages of love, or even the classical sonata form. "What marks these

content phenomena as transmedial is the fact that they do not have an easily traceable origin which can be attributed to a certain medium or that such an origin does not play a role in the gestation of the works in question" (Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited" 19).

The other type of extracompositional intermediality is called intermedial transposition. It can be identified when similar features or contents are present in the works of different media, which, at the same time, clearly come from another medium, and where a transfer between the two media can be seen. "As with all forms of intermediality, intermedial transposition from a 'source' to a 'target' medium can apply both to parts and to the entirety of individual semiotic entities and also to larger units such as genres" (Wolf, "Relations" 6). For example, Wolf states that a narrator (a common component of verbal fiction) could be transposed to film or drama. "In drama the transposition leads to the 'undramatic' incorporation of a 'presenter' character in what characteristically is referred to as 'epic drama', and in film the result of such a transposition is the well-known device of 'voice-over'" (Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited" 20). An example of an entire work being transferred would be the transposition of Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* into Richard Strauss' opera of the same name. According to Wolf, the intermedial quality is the space between the two pieces. The Strauss opera can be understood without a foreknowledge of Wilde's play, even though it is common knowledge that the source of the opera is the play. As with this example, intermedial transpositions, as Wolf says, result in independent signifying units.

Intracompositional intermediality, or, as Wolf calls it, intermediality in the narrow sense (*Musicalization* 36), is the "direct or indirect participation of more than one medium of communication in the signification and / or semiotic structure of a work or semiotic complex, an involvement that must be verifiable within this semiotic entity" ("Intermediality Revisited" 17). Wolf goes on to say that intracompositional intermediality can be divided into two types, intermedial reference and plurimediality.

Intermedial reference produces the feeling of medial and semiotic uniformity because it does not imply the integration of the signifiers of other media. In intermedial reference, the involvement of another medium is not dominant, as it appears through the signifiers and signifieds of the particular work. Using this concept, Wolf says that a "monomedial work remains monomedial and displays only one semiotic system, regardless of the intermedial reference" ("Intermediality Revisited" 23). The reference is realized by the signifiers in the dominant medium that the particular work uses in such a way that the non-dominant medium exists as an idea. Wolf calls this covert or indirect intermediality.

Intermedial reference, based upon the previous model, can be divided into subcategories: implicit reference (intermedial imitation) and explicit reference (intermedial thematization). Implicit reference indicates that the signifiers of the dominant medium are referred to implicitly or indirectly, whereas in explicit reference, a medium or a representative of a medium appears in another.

Plurimediality exists when the typical or conventional signifiers of two or more media are clearly present in a particular work at least once. This term encompasses what Scher calls literature and music, which, when considering opera, is the synthesis of drama and music, or when considering song is the union of poetry and music. "In this form intermediality itself and the original components of the intermedial mixture are directly discernible on the surface of the work, that is, on the level of the signifiers, since they appear to belong to heterogeneous semiotic systems, although these components need not always be 'quotable' separately" (Scher qtd. in Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited" 22). Very often when two or more different kinds of media are united, the result is what Rajewsky calls media combination[116]. She goes on to say that the things which make media combination intermedial is

[116] According to Rajewsky, this can be applied to a number of things such as opera, film, computer installations, comics, etc. She states that such combination of media in the aforementioned phenomena is often referred to as multi-media, mixed media, and intermedia (cf. Rajewsky 52).

> determined by the medial constellation constituting a given media product, which is to say the result or the very process of combining at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation. These two media or medial forms are each present in their own materiality and contribute to the constitution and signification of the entire product in their own specific way. Thus, for this category, intermediality is a semiotic-communicative concept based on the combination of at least two medial forms of articulation. The span of this category runs from a mere contiguity of two or more material manifestations of different media, to a "genuine" integration, and integration which in its most pure form would privilege none of its constitutive elements. The conception, of say, an opera or film as separate genres makes explicit that the combination of different medial forms of articulation may lead to the formation of new, independent art or media genres, a formation wherein the genre's plurimedial foundation becomes its specificity. (Rajewsky 52)

I find Rajewsky's definition to be a good starting point that can perhaps be clarified with Wolf's terminology. For this category (again based on Scher), Wolf uses the term plurimediality and breaks it into two types, intermedial fusion (which Rajewsky refers to as genuine integration) and intermedial combination.[117] As mentioned earlier, intermedial fusion is when the combination of two or more media results in a new form. If one were to remove one of the media, the new form would suffer. Opera performance is an example of intermedial fusion for if any component were to be removed, the performance of the opera in question would suffer from the missing component. Intermedial combination, at the other end of plurimediality, exists, when one medial component interprets or imitates elements of another component, for example, when text and music are combined to create song. The following chart, created by Wolf, is a graphic representation of the different intermedial typologies.

[117] In my opinion, the Wolf category adds a sense of lucidity to the typology identified by Rajewsky.

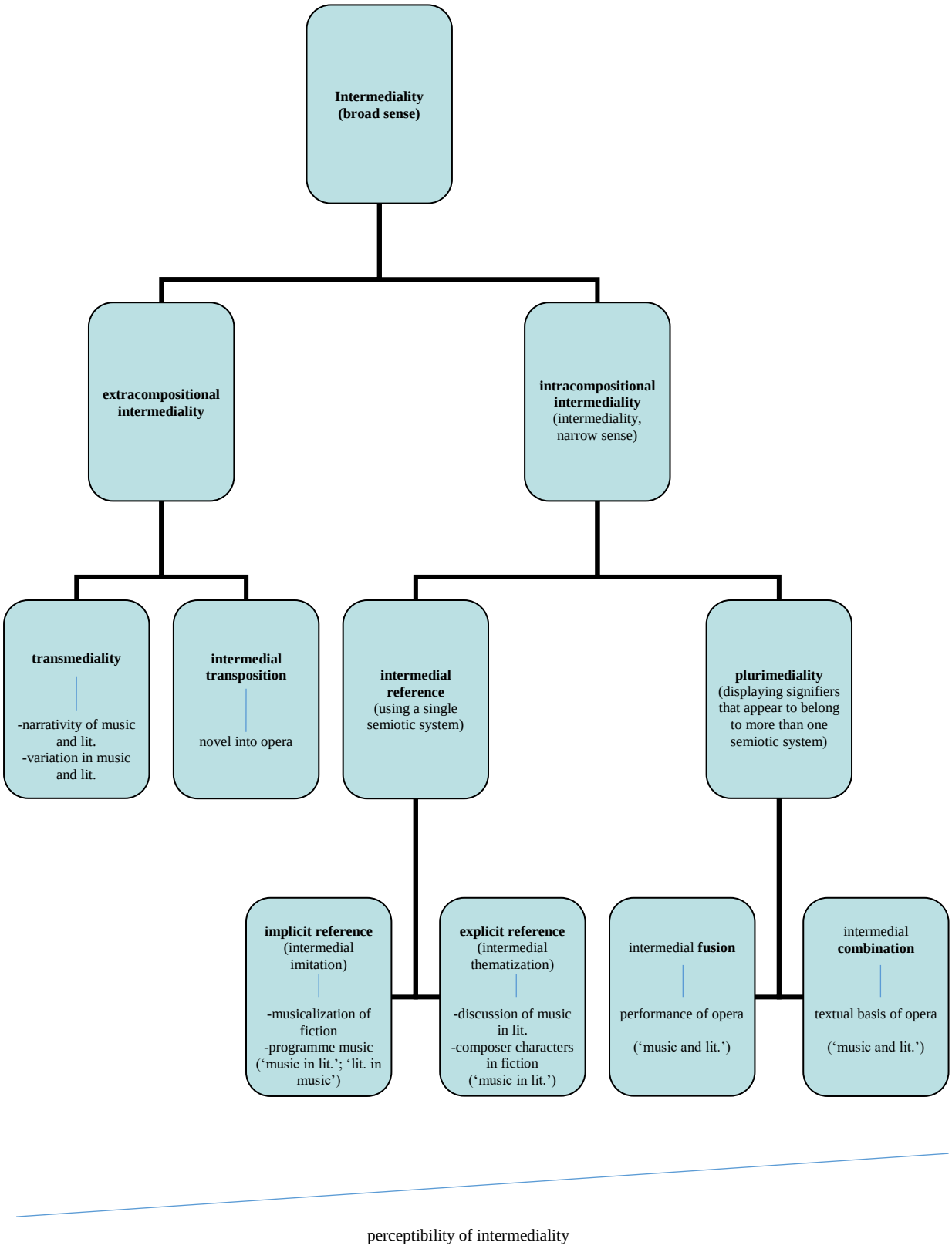

Fig. 0: System of intermedial relations illustrated with musico-literary examples (Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited" 28)

The typologies shown here represent the most recent developments and concepts used in the realm of intermediality. The concept most suitable for the next part of this study is plurimediality for it is the combination of two media, here poetry and music, and will demonstrate how the music imitates and interprets the poetry.

In this chapter, both poetry and music have been identified as media, and a definition of intermediality as it applies to this study has been found. As I have already mentioned in the introduction, poetry and music are inherently intermedial. Nevertheless, on what basis is this claim made? Taking into account the conventions of poetry, one can see that they also exist in music. For example, poetry contains both rhythm and meter. These conventions are made manifest when the poetry is read, and regardless if it is read aloud or not, the words will reveal a rhythm, and one will be able to 'hear' a melody. One might say, then, that poetry is inherently musical.

According to John Hollander, the music of poetry refers to the "nonsemantic properties of the language of a poem including not only its rationalized prosody, but its actual sound on being read, and certain characteristics of its syntax and imagery as well [… and] that because of this 'music,' the effects of a poem operate on the reader [or listener] in ways in which the words of a telegram do not" (232). Poetry then, through its rhythm, its forms, and its imagery, takes on an aesthetic character that normal language does not. Wolf explains this by saying that "this may explain why the musicalness[118] of poetry has frequently been emphasized in aesthetic theory, why it was poetry that was called one of the 'sister arts' of music in the eighteenth century and before. Furthermore, this may also justify – in some cases – poem titles such as Théophile Gautier's 'Symphonie en blanc majeur' (1853), T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1944) or Paul Celan's 'Todesfuge' (1952)" (*Musicalization* 3).

[118] Hollander also states that literary history has been repeatedly confronted with a variety of analogical symbiosis of music and poetry. These include the Latin conductus, the troubadour from the medieval period; the unification of music and poetry in the Greek manner during the Renaissance; the treatment of the two arts in the Baroque as "Sphere-born, harmonious sisters"; the attempt by the Romantics to identify the programmatic character of the music from that era with its poetry as a transfigured experience. (cf. Hollander 232)

The Singer as a Medium

One aspect of *Nocturne* that has not yet been discussed is that of performance. Going back to a general definition of intermediality, Chapple and Kattenbelt state that it "is associated with the blurring of generic boundaries, crossover and hybrid performances, intertextuality, intermediality [sic], hypermediality and a self-conscious reflexivity that displays the devices of performance in performance" (11). Wolf says that "from a semiotic point of view, literature is a medium transmitted by many technical and institutional media: lyric poetry, as well as the epics of old were orally performed, in part with musical accompaniment, before becoming literature in the etymological sense of written texts" ("(Inter)mediality" n. pag.). Thus, the combination of text and music is one level of transformation, but when this combination is performed, it is transformed yet again because the interpretation of the performer is presented. In this respect, vocal music, or the art song[119], is akin to opera, however without sets and costumes. Good singers[120] transmit a message to their audiences, whether through live performance or through recorded performances. In her article "Digital Opera: Intermediality, Remediation and Education", Freda Chapple claims that "the singing actor in opera is a medium of intermediality and the interface between the intermedial form of opera itself and the audience who are the mediators of its intermediality in performance" (82). What she is saying here is that the singer is a medium, i.e. he or she functions as a communicative device (a medium). Furthermore, when performing, the singer mediates the music and simultaneously mediates the audience experience. This is what she calls 'the intermediality in opera'. To show how this concept can be applied to the present study, one must accept that the

[119] According to Peter Stadlen, an art song (*Lied*) is "[t]he elusive art of suggesting the dramatic content of a text by other than operatic means" (qtd. in Kennedy and Kennedy 436).

[120] It should be noted that bad singers also transmit messages; however, the messages are often unintended. Take for example Roseanne Barr's rendition of the national anthem of the United States of America at a San Diego Padre's baseball game in 1990. She screamed some of the notes, and while singing grabbed her crotch and spat on the pitcher's mound. The message communicated to the listeners was one of disgust and abhorrence – clearly not the message the composer had intended for the song.

art song, of which *Nocturne* is a synthesized collection, like opera, is a lyrical mode of representation. In a conversation Chapple had with Tom Marandola, a professional singer and vocal coach, she argues that

> the singer mediates the music and, at the same time, mediates the audience experience of how the medium affects their perception of the world represented in the operatic frame. There may be a temptation to ascribe the intermedial moment purely to aesthetic appreciation, but singers tell us that, at the moment of mediation, they are very conscious of what their voice is doing and the impact it has on themselves, as well as on their audience:
>
> Tom: Some of the big moments from Rosenkavalier or from Bohéme will move you because that is the height of Romanticism, but I can get some of my biggest buzzes from singing what one could think of as simple, very clinical austere pieces of Palestrina. The feeling of singing a line of music that is interweaving with other lines of music, and so making again an overall sound picture is wonderful. It is not just because you are enjoying the sound of your own voice, but you are aware of being part of something bigger, and of how you fit into a whole, and it is incredibly emotional.
>
> What this tells us is that the singer knows instinctively and cognitively that the language of music has no necessary signified. The abstract nature of the form, based on mathematical structures (the length of the notes played are measurements of time) and harmonic conventions (combinations of notes according to different key signatures) relate to an awareness of another reality induced through combinations of sounds and rhythms. The singer is aware of what the medium of music is doing to them at the same time as they are performing the music. Singers are aware also of the power of music to move the performer and audience into another space … They are literally *in-between* realities and mediate the music in the act of performance. (84 – 85)

In this particular study, the song cycle *Nocturne* is the operatic frame, and those who sing and perform it, like the singers in an opera, also know that the music moves both themselves and those who listen to it. According to Chapple, singers must negotiate the intermediality of the medium of music, in this case the poetry in *Nocturne*, and the medium of music. The singers must memorize both the text and music; they must process the music for tone, pitch, rhythm, and dynamics, and then communicate the product to the audience. Singers are then forced into mediating their voices with the composer's music, the text, the conductor's rhythms and tempi, and the director's musical concept. This shows that something new is needed to describe this phenomenon. Thus, I identify the singer as an intermedial performer: he or she must negotiate, or rather, mediate the influences of the composer, the conductor, and the poet. At the same time, the singer must retain an emotional

response to the music. In essence, then, singers mediate the media of both poetry and music (media combination).

How the singer goes about mediating depends on a number of factors, such as experience (which includes body language, facial expressions, and vocal ability), understanding and interpretation of the both the text and music (which will determine how the piece is sung: articulation, dramatization, dynamics, tempi, etc.), and interaction with the audience.

These points and more will be discussed in later chapters. However, I felt it necessary to present the preceding information to show how I understand intermediality and how I will use it in this study. The next two chapters will examine how the poetry analyzed in the previous chapter is transformed by Britten into something new, and how the texts and music are then mediated by different singers.

7. An Intermedial Analysis: Text and Music

"It won't be madly popular because it is the strangest & remotest thing – but then dreams are strange and remote" (Britten qtd. in Reed and Cooke 63). This is what Britten said of *Nocturne* in a letter to the Countess of Harewood in 1958. Upon listening to the work, one has to agree with the composer that it is "strange and remote", but at the same time charming and pensive. The letter, from which the above quote comes, dates back to the time when Britten was setting the poems he had chosen for the work. He goes on to say "I've done the Shelley ('On a poet's lips I slept'), Tennyson (the Kraken), Coleridge ('Encinctured'), Middleton (a mad piece about night noises) & just finishing the Wordsworth French Revolution one. To come – the Wilfred Owens, Keats, & Shakespeare" (63). In a footnote to the letter, editor Mervyn Cooke comments that the poetry Britten used came from Carol Stewart's *Poems of Sleep and Dream*; C. Day Lewis' expanded edition of *Palgrave's Golden Treasury*; John Heath-Stubbs' and David Wright's *The Forsaken Garden: An Anthology of Poetry 1824–1909*; and Walter De la Mare's *Behold the Dreamer*.

> The composer sketched out a 'Possible Sequence' for the work in his school German exercise book in which he planned a number of major works in the late 1950s and early 1960s, deleting Sitwell's "The Youth with the Red-Gold Hair"[121] and replacing it with a Middleton text for the movement with horn obbligato … The only points in the work where he appears to have had second thoughts occur at the very end, which was reworked to include a final return of the string ritornello motif in combination with the harp, and at the conclusion of the Middleton setting ("And the cats cry mew!") where as an afterthought Britten memorably reintroduced the twelve-note theme[122] first heard at "Nurslings of immortality!" in the opening Shelley song. (Reed and Cooke 68 – 69)

In this chapter, the analysis will be two-fold: an in-depth musical analysis, which includes the string ritornello motif and the twelve-note theme, and an intermedial analysis, which is concentrated on, but not limited to plurimedial intermediality.

[121] This poem will be referred to again later in the chapter. The text can be found in the Appendix.

[122] The use of a twelve-tone row is a further indication of Britten's compositional development. While it is clear that Britten was influenced by Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, *Nocturne* is the first cycle where he overtly employs a full twelve-tone row.

A Musical Analysis

As a musical piece, *Nocturne* seems to appear out of nothing. It seems as if it takes its time starting, putting together wisps of musical thoughts and ideas that must have hung in the air before the first note is ever sounded. The opening measures introduce the string ritornello[123] (Fig. 1), the life of the piece, which many musicologists equate with the soft and gentle breathing of the sleeper. Humphrey Carpenter says that if that is indeed what Britten had intended, then the breaths are abnormally fast and shallow (cf. 378). Musically, the ritornello appears between each song and serves as a linking device. The piece is through-composed, meaning that one song blends into another without stopping.

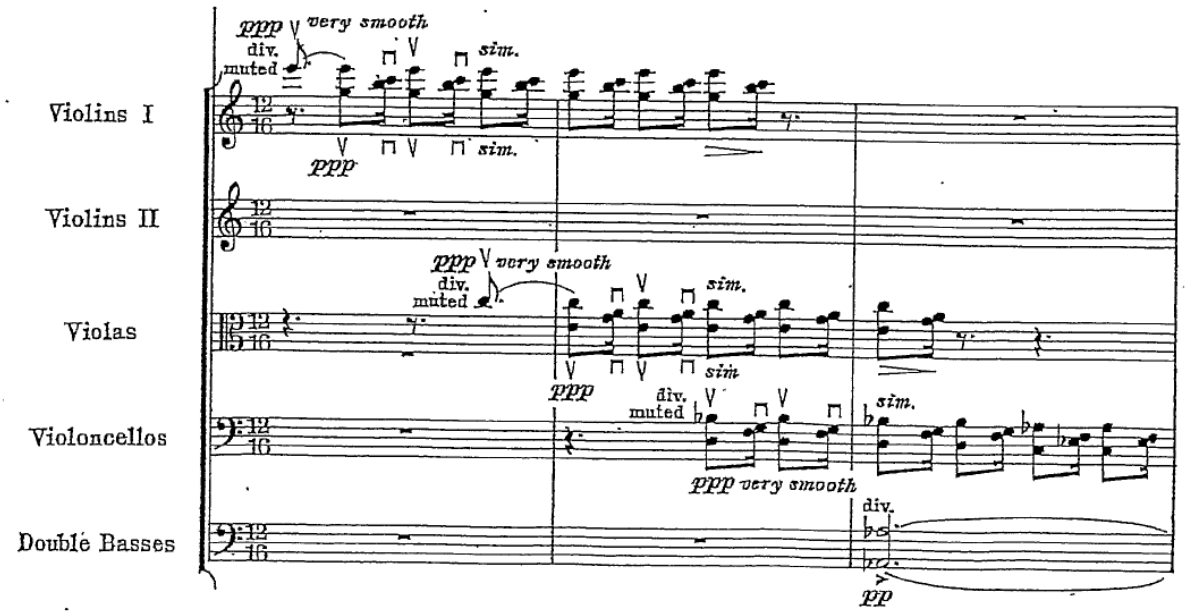

Fig. 1: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 1 – 3 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 103). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

Even though the opening key signature indicates a tonal center of C, by the third measure, the tonal center of Db/f makes its first appearance. Through the rest of the cycle, the

[123] Here, ritornello refers to "the repetition of the instrumental introduction, and hence the introduction itself" (Kennedy and Kennedy 629). We will see later in the analysis that the music at the beginning of the piece serves not only as an introduction, but also as a transition between poems.

tonal centers seem to be in conflict with each other, each one fighting for supremacy, and just when one center seems to have established itself, the other reappears, reminding the listener that the battle has not yet been won. This conflict is ultimately resolved at the end of the cycle with a return to the C tonal center, and a repetition of the vocal line that appeared at the end of the first song[124].

One musical element that is common throughout the song cycle is the vocal line. The vocal lines are composed in free arioso style[125], rarely form symmetrical periods, and are less prone to rely on literally scalic or arpeggio shapes. In many melodic and harmonic contexts, a set of notes is immediately complimented by the rest of the twelve-tone row, yet Britten also reserves space for diatonic combinations. With the exception of the first song, obbligato[126] instruments are combined with the string orchestra to accompany the voice. All of the obbligato instruments come together with the string orchestra in the last song to form a rich, Mahlerian[127] texture, a compositional technique that sets the song apart from the rest in the cycle.

"On a Poet's Lips I Slept"

According to Arnold Whittall, "the opening pages of the *Nocturne* show a manner of blurring tonality by superimpositions more dense than Britten had used before, yet the first movement

[124] This tonal ambiguity is nothing new, as we have encountered it in Britten's earlier cycles. However, the tonal ambiguity in this piece is more pronounced and more developed than in the cycles previously examined in Chapter 2.

[125] Arioso style is "(2) [a] short melodious passage at the beginning or end of an aria. … (4) in instrumental music, a [lyrical] passage" (Kennedy and Kennedy 27).

[126] "Indispensable. Adjective attached to the name of an instrument e.g. 'vc. obbligato', where the instrument's part is obligatory, and special or unusual in effect. To use the term in the opposite sense of optional or ad libitum is wrong, as is the frequently-encountered spelling *obligato* (favoured by Britten)" (Kennedy and Kennedy 541).

[127] Thus, Mahler's influence continues to play a role in Britten's compositions.

is felt subconsciously as a secure enough I – V – I [ABA] experience" (*The Music* 372). The rocking or breathing ritornello is introduced by the 1st violins as a C major chord in second inversion with an added major 7th, clearly indicating the C major tonal center. However, this tonal center becomes less stable in the second measure when the violas take up the ritornello, also as a C major chord, but in 1st inversion and with an added 6th. By the time the celli have taken up the ritornello, the piece reaches the subdominant of an F major chord in 1st inversion with an added 2nd. Then, the double basses enter on the pedal tone of Ab, which indicates that the song is no longer in C major. The first sequence ends in the 5th measure, but Britten

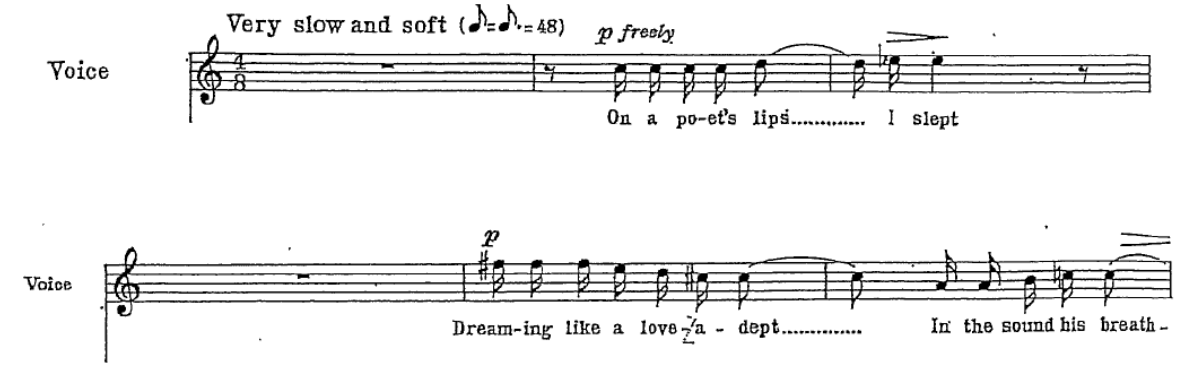

Fig. 2: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 1 – 6 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 103). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

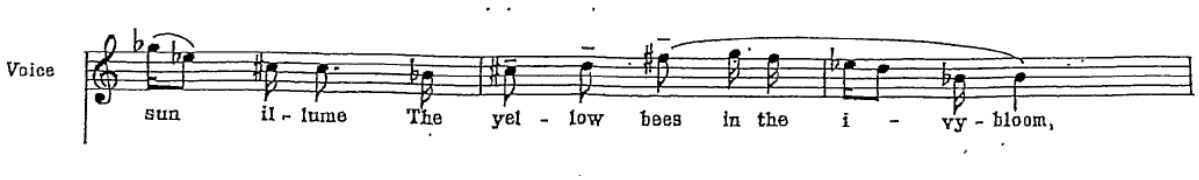

Fig. 3: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 19 – 21 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 106). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

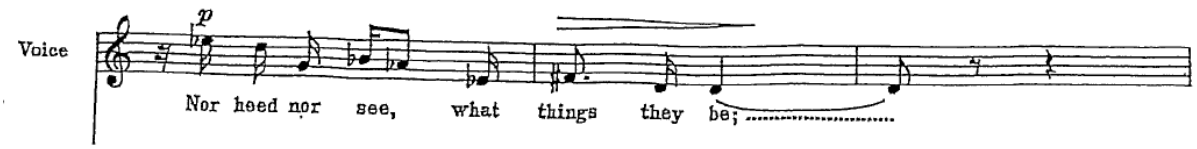

Fig. 4: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 22 – 24 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 106). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

repeats the entire sequence in such a way that it overlaps with the first. However, the second mention of the ritornello is set a whole tone higher than in the first mention.

The vocal line appears in the second measure with an ascending, four-note melody, the composite of which results in an interval of a minor 3rd. This figure is inverted and raised one whole tone in the second ritornello. These two figures (Fig. 2) constitute one of the three "aëreal shapes that haunt" Britten uses to interpret Shelley's poem, and which form the vocal activity for the first section. What Britten does here is musically referred to as text painting – the attempt to paint a musical picture of the text. "The shapes having been created by poets, are more vividly real than anything to be seen in ordinary daylight" (Holst 15). The second shape (Fig. 3) appears in measures 2 and 3: an interval of an augmented 2nd; and the third appears at the end of measure 6 and the beginning of measure 9: an interval of a perfect fourth (Fig. 4). As with the first shape, the other two shapes often appear in inverted form, and often begin on different notes other than those with which they originally appeared. Sometimes these shapes overlap or are combined with other shapes to extend the thoughts of the poet.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the first song has a I-V-I structure and the basses finally establish C major as the definitive tonic in measure 13, at the point where the upper harmony is most elusive. It is also at the word wildernesses that the voice is the most declamatory, emphasizing that the sleeper's thoughts are wild and untamed.

The middle section (which begins at rehearsal number 1) suggests a kind of G minor, and the G fittingly converts to a V function to make a simple return at 2. Instead of using the three shapes that haunt motives in this section, Britten employs harmonic intervals. This section clearly suggests the dream in which the sleeping persona is engaged. In the first part of this section, measures 16 – 21, the melodic line rises and falls creating musical climaxes, which, again, paint the text. The first high point is reached at the word "dawn". Musically, the sun rises and immediately sets by skipping down a 5th to the word gloom. The next climax occurs on the word sun and the last climax on the word bees. This section then ends after the next melodic vocal line "Nor heed nor see, what things they be". Britten puts the vocal line in the key of Eb before setting up the dominant D, a move that reflects the text's tension and uncertainty.

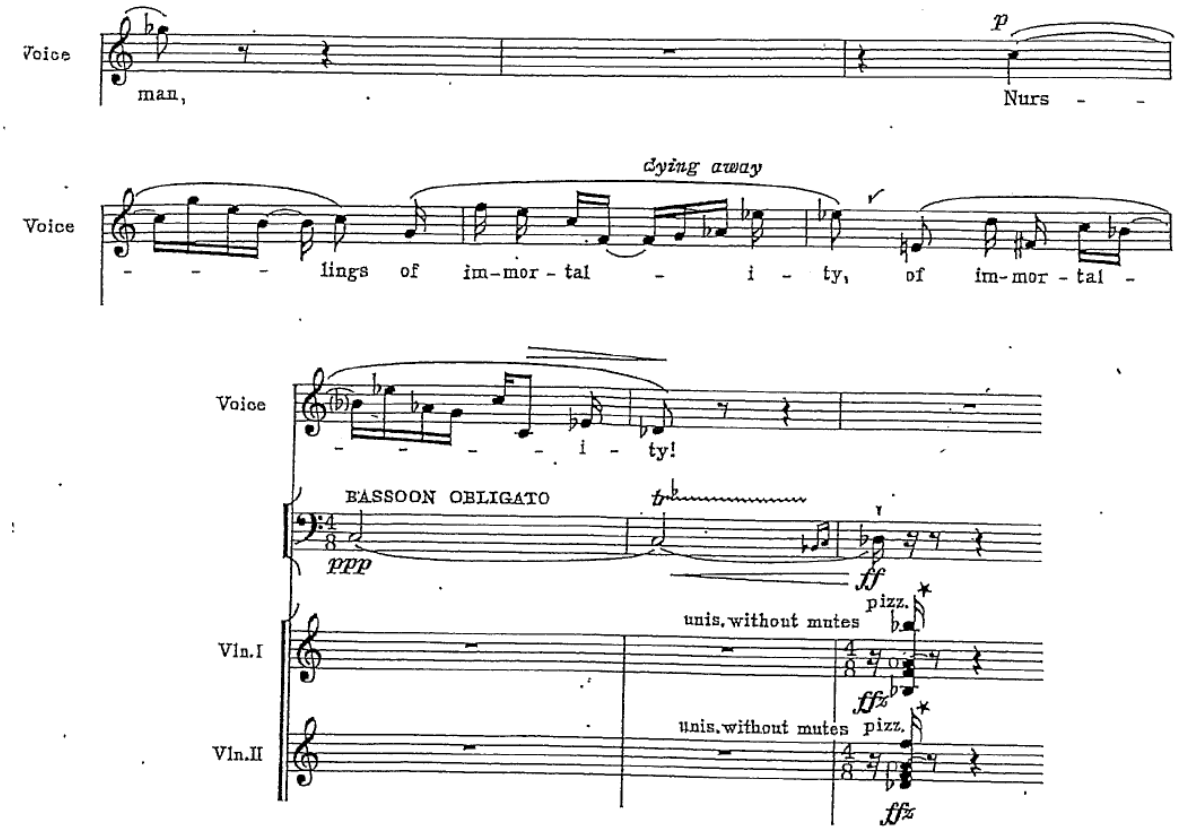

Fig. 5: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 32 – 39 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 108 - 109). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

After an abridged reprise of the opening ritornello, the vocal line suddenly takes flight, symbolizing the poetic vision in a magnificently shaped descent, which comes to rest on a Db. This long melisma signifies the immortal nature of the poet's ideas. "We become aware of their immortality in [this] phrase that is quoted throughout the work" (Holst 15). These ideas that have been put together and have been given birth will last forever, even after the poet, himself, is no more. Britten emphasizes this idea with the diminuendo and the descending octave leap in the vocal line on the word "immortality".

It is interesting to note that the last vocal line in the first song is actually a tone row[128] consisting of 12 notes, the first four of which outline a C major triad with an added major 7th (the same chord that appeared in the first measure of the work). However, the melisma contains only 11 of the 12 notes in the row. The 12th tone, A, is found in the first pizzicato chord of the second song. (Fig. 5)

"The Kraken"

"Each song has its own characteristic solo instrument for obbligato. The first dreamlike shape to emerge is Tennyson's Kraken" (Holst 15).

The A serves as an irritant against the prevailing Bb minor of the ground bass[129] in the second song, and the song stays firmly rooted in this key throughout its entirety. The obbligato bassoon appears even before the first song ends. At a triple piano, the bassoon is so soft that if one does not listen carefully, it would not be heard until its second measure when it

[128] This shows the influence Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School had on Britten's compositional style. However, whereas much music composed using 12-tone technique is atonal, Britten's music clearly retains its tonal aspect, even though in many pieces, such as this one, tonal conventions are blurred.

[129] This is a "short thematic motif in the bass which is constantly repeated with changing harmonies while upper parts proceed and vary. [It] originated in *cantus firmus* of choral music and became popular in [the] 17th century, particularly in England, as a ground for variations in string music. Hence[,] the number of divisions on a ground" (Kennedy and Kennedy 315).

sounds a C-Db trill. At the end of this trill, the violins play a Db minor chord with an added 7th (the irritating A). The chord, played at a double forte, is violent and immediately indicates a change in mood. Meanwhile the double basses continue the ritornello theme as if trying to retain the gentle aspect of the dreaming poet. However, the bassoon once more enters with a trill, this time E-F, but ending with the same violent pizzicato chord in the strings, albeit with a thicker texture due to the violas. The bassoon then plays a virtuostic melisma, starting very quietly, but with a crescendo that ends on a double forte. The end of this interlude begins the second song's ostinato figure, a widely spaced, three-bar tonic arpeggio found in the bassoon and the double basses. At the end of each mention of the ostinato figure, the bassoon displays the Kraken's majestic, but frightening appearance with a three-and-a-half-octave arpeggio. Above this figure, the other strings continue to accentuate the ostinato figure with different pizzicato chords (Fig. 6). In each of the pizzicato chords, the irritant A is present, reminding us that not all is well. The ostinato figure is thick and heavy and paints pictures of the ocean depths, the place where the kraken sleeps.

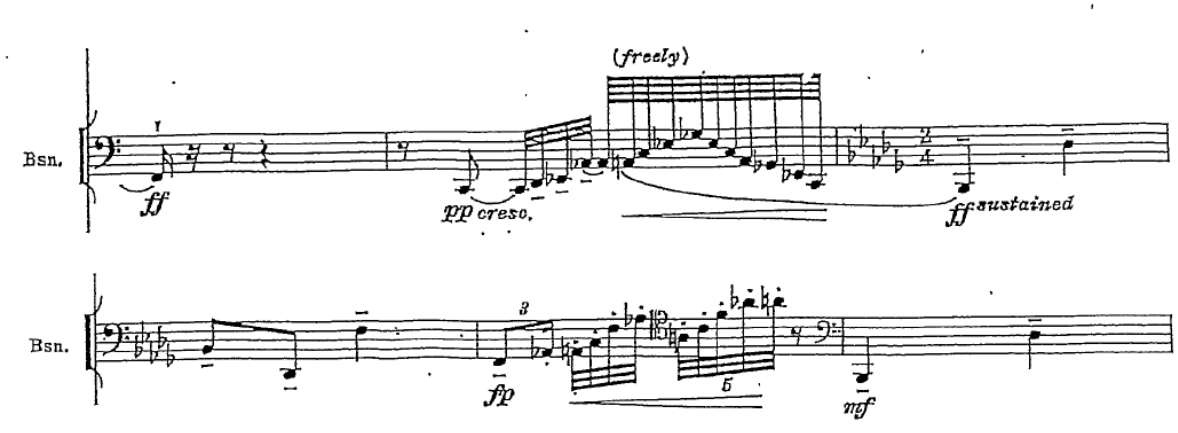

Fig. 6: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 42 – 45 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 109). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

The voice enters at the first repetition of the ground bass figure, outlines the tonic chord in declamatory fashion (Fig. 7), describing where the kraken abides. The words “the upper deep” appear in the key of C, suggesting that “the upper deep” does not belong here. The Bb minor key immediately returns in the next measure, but upon the mention of “ancient, dreamless sleep”, the key again switches back to C, which subtly reminds us of the first song. However, the memory is quickly erased when kraken’s name is mentioned, for the dreamer suddenly finds himself in a nightmare and, on a high Bb, screams out the name of the beast. The name is screamed out a second time, but not as passionately as the first, and the dreamer realizes that, while still frightening, the kraken is asleep and poses no immediate danger.

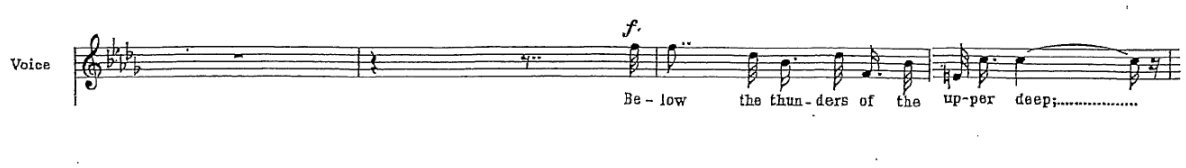

Fig. 7: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 47 – 48 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 110). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

Like the first song, the second is also arranged into an ABA form. Here, the middle section, while softer than the first, is just as intense. The ostinato figure continues in the double basses, but softly. The upper strings alternate playing soft 2- to 3-note, plucked chords and trills that are violently articulated, and then immediately slip into the darkness of the deep. Here, new tonal areas are explored by the soloists to conjure up the varied images expressed in the poem.

The bassoon pivots around an F#, never going more than three tones away from it[130]. At the same time, the voice appears to be more at ease, but this easiness is undermined by the wide intervals between notes (Fig. 8), which suggest uneasiness and fear. Meanwhile the upper strings play short trilled notes in the second part of this section, the bassoon becomes increasingly agitated, which is heard in the staccato 32nd notes. Britten musically expresses the multitude of "polypi" with the single trilled notes in the upper strings. At the same time, he displays the size of the kraken by giving the singer longer note values. As this section continues, the polypi multiply and the kraken's arms are moved by the gentle rocking of the ocean.

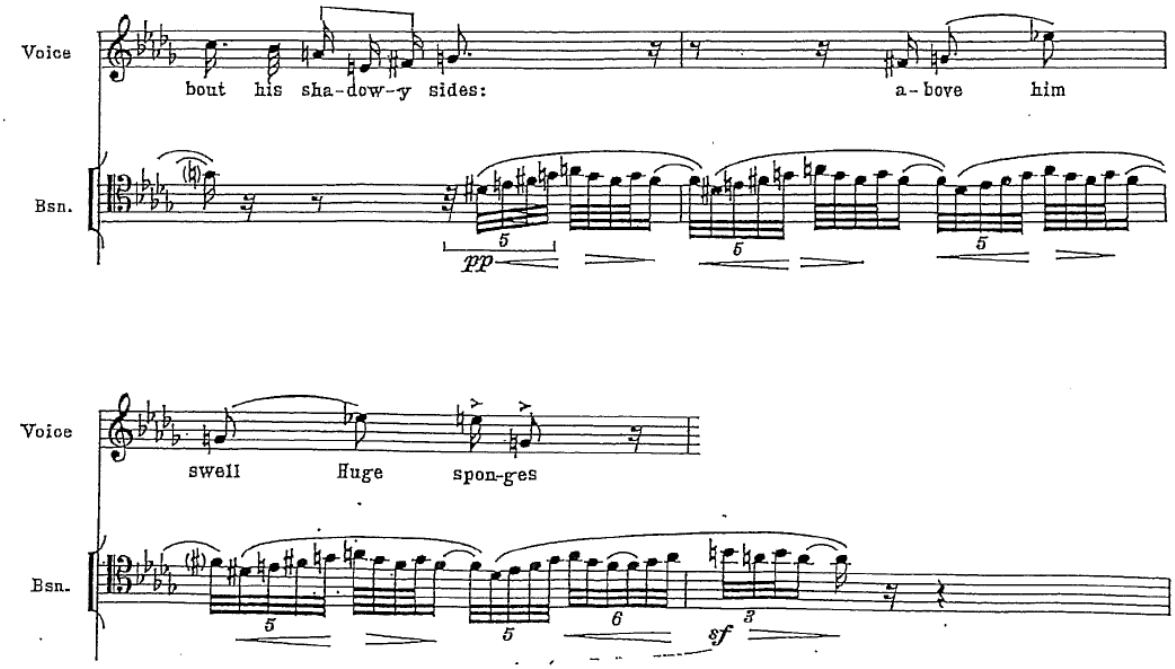

Fig. 8: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 60 – 63 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 112 - 113). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

The first section returns briefly, but dramatically. The ground bass finally breaks free of its shackles to achieve an expiring final statement in the strained high register of the bassoon. Musically, the rising bass ostinato signifies the rising kraken. At the end of this

[130] This feature is also referred to as an extended gruppetto. Usually the gruppetto implies a 4-note figure, the note above, the note itself, the note below, returning to the note itself. In this instance, Britten has created a modified 7-note gruppetto where the note itself is extended by two notes instead of just one.

ascent, the bassoon and the upper strings indicate the kraken's torment. It writhes in agony until, at last, it dies. By having the kraken die at the sounding of the A in the voice, Britten has put emphasis on the note's significance in the song. The bassoon makes one last feeble mention of the ostinato figure, stating that the kraken is no longer a threat. Instead, it fades into nothingness.

Here the opening ritornello returns reminding us that the experience with the kraken was nothing more than a bad dream. The poet continues to sleep and the ritornello modulates to a new key – this time built on A. As a result, the irritant has been supplanted by something harmonic and beautiful.

"Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves"

> [t]he figurations are no longer so dependent on long chains of superimposed thirds: at first they derive from the vocal phrases, then for much of the song (e.g. from fig. 10 they form palindromic decorations of a simple I-IV-V (-I) harmonic treadmill … The string parts add little but points of emphasis to the voice/obbligato duet, but this achieves beautiful suppleness from the playing-off of a flowing Lydian vocal ostinato eight minim beats long against a harmonic circuit of three bars (i.e., nine minims). (Evans 373)

The song begins with an instrumental introduction of nine measures in which the mood of the piece is set (Fig. 9). Through the harp's arpeggiated 13^{th} chords and the sparse orchestral accompaniment, Britten creates a somewhat ethereal and mysterious mood. The harp can be heard throughout the entire song with three exceptions. The first interruption occurs in measures 114 and 115 when the voice sings, "A lovely boy was plucking fruits". The second interruption occurs in measures 136 – 139 when the voice sings "But who that beauteous Boy beguiled, / That beauteous Boy to linger here?" The third pause occurs at the end of the song when the voice sings "Has he no friend, no loving mother near?", after which the harp does not return.

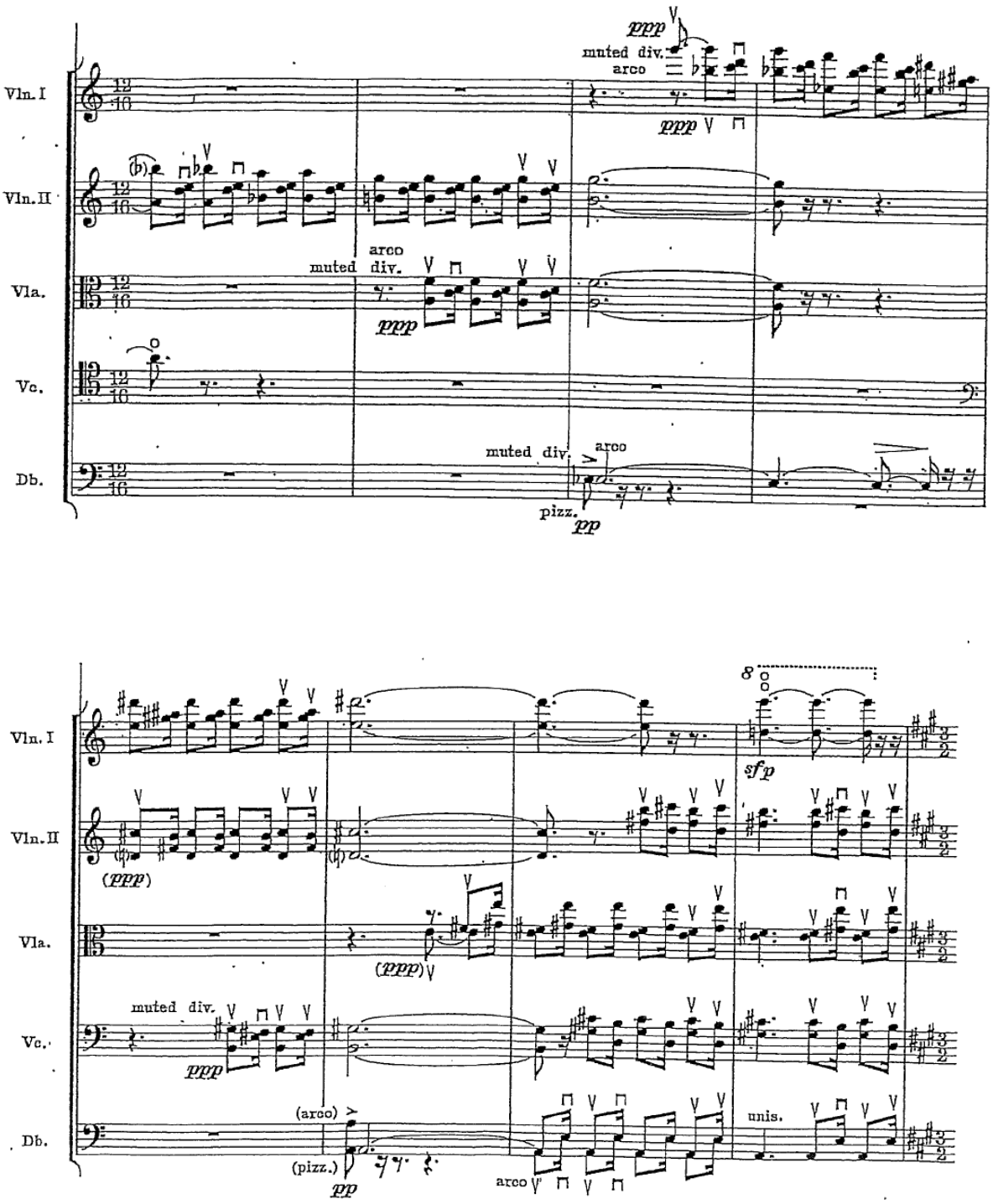

Fig. 9: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 90 – 97 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 119). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

The narrator alternates between two melodic ideas: one is melodic and flowing made up of quarter notes moving in ascending and descending lines either diatonically, or in leaps of a 3rd or an occasional 4th. This flowing, tranquil idea occurs every time the voice sings

about nature (measures 119 – 136). This idea returns at rehearsal number 12 at the words "In place so silent, and so wild". Again, the voice is describing nature, not the boy. The other melodic idea is made up of staccato notes and is more disjointed with larger intervals and small pauses. This musical idea always refers to the boy.

It seems that the first time the harp stops, the narrator is surprised that what comes into view in this mysterious world is a boy. He is startled and at the same time uncomfortable. The other two times the harp stops, the narrator shows his irritation by posing the two questions mentioned earlier.

In the rest of the song, the narrator marvels at what he sees, a boy waltzing naked in the moonlit wilderness – "a picture rich and rare".

At both instances where the joyous mood is lost, Britten accentuates the change by assigning the violas highly dissonant tone clusters: the first is a diatonic collection of four tones and the second is a collection of two perfect intervals, a perfect $4^{th,}$ and a perfect 5^{th}. The resulting sound is hollow and piercing. The glissando in the harp right before the tone cluster coupled with the sforzando from the strings heightens the sudden contrast in mood. It is on such a chord that the song ends, leaving the listener unsettled and pensive.

"The Midnight Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting"

At rehearsal number 13, the opening ritornello returns and the next obbligato instrument appears – the horn, which sounds a low, soft Ab. While the horn sounds out the midnight bell, the strings sustain the tonic chord of the new key, C major, but with an added 6^{th}. The horn sounds the second bell, a D, played against a tone cluster distributed to the violins. It is against this tone cluster and the horn's D that the voice enters, itself sounding a different bell

with a different rhythm resembling the bells of a bell tower. Altogether, the bells ring 12 times signifying midnight (Fig. 10).

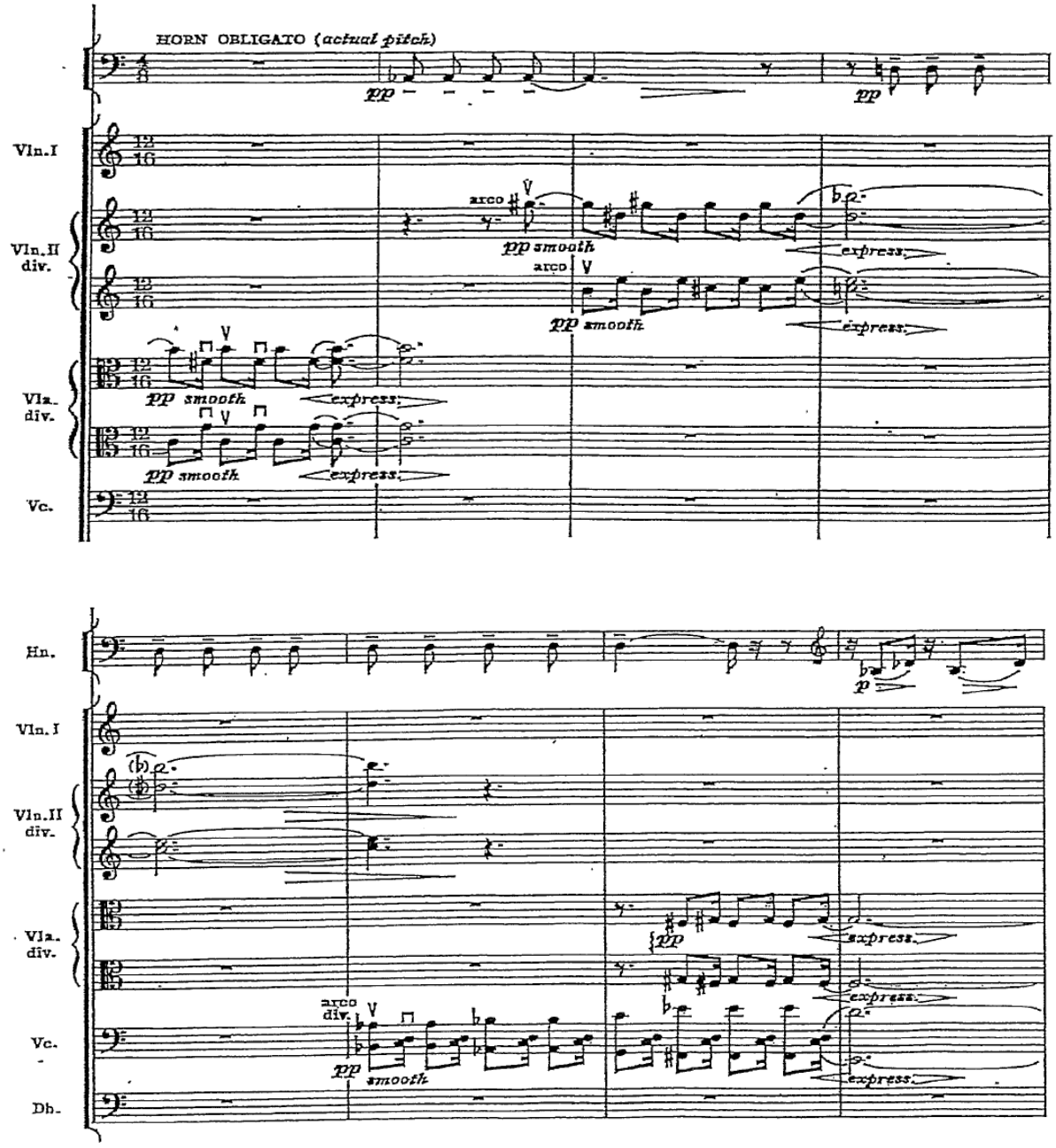

Fig. 10: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 149 – 156 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 130 - 131). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

Britten employs the rocking ritornello throughout this song as he did in the first song. The result is tonal ambivalence, which sets up a perfect background for the wide range of

onomatopoeic sounds the horn and voice share to represent the different noises the night animals make. In most instances, the voice announces the sound a particular animal makes and then the horn produces it. One can hear the dogs howling, the nightingale singing, the owls sitting precariously on their boughs, the ravens croaking, and the crickets hopping. However, there are times when the voice and the horn both take part in producing the animal sound. This occurs when the mouse goes peep and the cats cry mew. The last mention of the cats mewing is a restatement of the "Nurslings of immortality" twelve-tone row. Here, the melisma signifies the ceaseless mewing of the cats. The 11-note melisma appears again as a duet between the horn and the tenor at "mew! mew!"' in the 4th measure before rehearsal number 15.

Although the key of C is established, it is used here not as the final tonic, but in a cadential sense from the subdominant to the dominant, iv + I + v which "facilitates a semitonal transition to the tritonal pole of F sharp on which the" next song begins (Whittall, *The Music* 373).

Now that we know more about the musical structure of the piece, I will investigate the intermedial aspects of it.

8. An Intermedial Analysis

With regard to plurimediality, I will focus on the following questions: How does one medial component (in this case music) imitate or interpret elements of another component (poetry) – intermedial combination; and does the combination of text and music result in a new form (intermedial fusion). Additionally, I will explore transmedial aspects of *Nocturne*.

Intermedial Combination

Concerning imitation, there is extremely little that the music actually imitates in the poetry. Even so, there are two aspects that must be considered: sound and rhythm. The most overt instance of imitation occurs in the Dekker song, "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting". Here, Britten is clearly trying to imitate the sounds of the animals. Each animal mentioned is represented musically by compositional figures Britten gives to the horn. The howling dogs are represented by the two eighth-note, sixteenth-note minor 3rd intervals in measures 156 and 157.

For the twitting nightingale, the muted horn plays a descending chromatic scale expressed in four sixteenth-note, thirty-second-note couplets, followed by a warble of a timed trill. For the owls, Britten scores groups of thirty-second-notes and a sixteenth-note to represent the owls precariously sitting on their boughs, fighting to maintain their balance. The ravens are represented with a brass mute playing two successive sixteenth-notes at a half step interval. The hopping crickets are shown by flutter-tongued sixteenth-notes. The mouse is characterized with muted staccato sixteenth-notes in a descending pattern of minor 3rds ending on a leap of a minor 7^{th}. However, instead of letting the horn imitate the cat alone,

Britten assigns this role to both the voice and the horn. The mewing occurs as a slurred figure that reminds us of the 11-note melisma in the first song.

In the first song, Britten imitates the rhythm Shelley built into the poem. First, after every line, the voice has a pause (some pauses are longer than others), or a longer note, indicating the end of a line. Britten also maintains the spoken meter through the rhythmic notation, but with a few minor differences. For example, the first line of the Shelley poem is in iambic tetrameter. Britten changes this to an iambic pentameter by giving the word 'lips' two iambs instead of just one. He does the same thing on the second syllable of the word "adept" and in the words "breathing kept", which is effectively an iambic heptameter phrase. Every time Britten deviates from the original meter, he is emphasizing what he believes to be important.

In the second song, Britten continues this rhythmic imitation by exaggerating the iambic figure with a strong thirty-second-second note, dotted eighth-note figure; the thirty-second note usually occurs on the unstressed syllable while the longer note is place on a stressed syllable. When this does not occur, as on the word "sleepeth", it is to bring the thought to a musical end. (It would sound rather unnatural to have the shorter note on the stressed syllable here.) The middle section loses this rhythmic imitation, but Britten replaces it with harmonic imitation. He maintains the natural stress on the words "faintest sunlights" with descending intervals of a 5^{th}, and later, the monosyllabic words "him swell Huge" all have equal length, but importance is put on the words with the higher notes, which are naturally louder. This technique he employs again at the words "Unnumber'd and enormous polypi / Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green"'. Here he takes both primary and secondary stress into account and how theses stresses combine to make longer phrases. The last section is as the first.

The rest of intermedial combination occurs in the form of interpretation. For Britten, tempo, notation, harmonic structures, dynamics, instrumentation, and articulation are the colors on his palette he uses to pain the text.

Britten uses the first lines of the Shelley poem to create coherence (the ritornello) between the poems and to establish a foundation for the piece, albeit an unstable one due to the nature of the subject matter, which Britten expresses through the shifting tonal centers. The first song is slow. The first tempo is listed as very slow (an eighth-note equals 48), and the second, majestic (an eighth-note equals 69). The third song is a slow waltz (a half-note equals 76 – 80) and the performance note for fourth song is "as the start". These tempi represent Britten's interpretation of the underlying mood of each poem. Even though the tempo in each of the four songs is slow, the character or mood expressed in terms of the dynamics, harmonic structures, and articulation is vastly different.

Dynamics have a myriad of uses and are good tools to help create mood. At the beginning of the piece, the instruments are extremely soft, but over a few measures, the sound becomes louder. This is not due to a louder dynamic marking, but the increase in volume is achieved through the instrumentation. There are simply more instruments. In the entirety of the first song, the dynamics for the violins, violas, and celli stays at a triple piano. Only the basses are allowed to play louder, albeit no more than a piano. This helps give the song a foundation above which the singer can orient himself. The softness in dynamics, coupled with the unstable harmonies in the upper strings, creates a background that is calm, pleasant, and mysterious.

At the same time, the undulating rhythm is a direct interpretation of the sleeping narrator. We can hear the person breathing, but we know that it is not a very deep sleep for the breathing is shallow and somewhat fast. Britten could have composed the breathing theme much slower and deeper, but that would have created another mood that perhaps he did not see in the poem, or did not want. Because the breathing is shallow and fast, Britten makes it

possible to imagine what is going on in the narrator's dream. The activity of the dream he expresses through the voice. The A, B, and C figures ("aërial shapes that haunt" mentioned earlier are just fragments that represent the thoughts that exist in the mind. Britten emphasizes that these thoughts are wild by accenting the syllables "er-nes-ses".

At the end of the song, the "Nurslings of immortality" thought is the result of ideas that have come together, and once these ideas have left the poet's lips they become immortal. This is shown in the lyricism expressed in the voice. Britten also writes the performance note "dying away" over the melisma, which makes us think about the immortality of the poet's words and thoughts. What is unclear, however, is if the narrator questions the immortality of the poet's words or if he is simply caught up in the rapture of the beauty of the words that have been created.

Britten's interpretation of the second poem is rather straightforward. The first performance note of the piece is "majestic". Thus, he sees Tennyson's kraken not only as monster, but also as something regal, powerful, and mysterious. First, the dynamic has changed from almost nothing in the first song, to a double forte. However, the dynamics are in constant opposition with each other. The tonic note of the arpeggiated ostinato chord is forte, but the other members of the chord are piano. Here we are reminded that the kraken is an enormous creature and even though it inhabits the murky depths of the ocean, its tentacles extend far beyond its body. Britten creates mystery in the second section by reducing the dynamic of the ostinato figure to a piano. We know through this that the kraken is still there, but we become aware of what is going on around it. The vocal line describes the activity in the bassoon.

Harmonically, the song has a firm foundation, again representing the kraken lying at the bottom of the ocean. However, when the harmonies change through a chromatically rising ostinato figure, Britten tells us that the kraken is swimming to the surface of the water. The fire is represented by the increased activity in the upper strings coming to a powerful climax

that kills the kraken, and, as mentioned before, the irritating A is more prominent, suggesting that the sinister has triumphed, while the kraken fades into nothingness.

At the end of the second song, Britten restates the breathing theme of the narrator from the first song. While this technique serves as a unifying element for the cycle, it also reminds the listener that this is still a dream state. The nightmare has ended and the sleeping narrator has the chance again to witness the poet putting thoughts together.

The third song is somewhat problematic because, here, Britten's personality comes through and influences his interpretation of the poem. I still believe, as I mentioned in Chapter 5, that together, the poems create a journey through different parts of the mind. We have seen both textually and musically the serenity in the state of mind exhibited in the first poem / song and the nightmare in the second poem / song. However, the third poem Britten interprets renders an interpretation quite different from mine and, I believe, from Coleridge.

It is well known that Britten was homosexual and his relationship with the tenor, Peter Pears is well documented. His music is often labelled as overtly homosexual, as the following incident recorded by Mervyn Cooke, in his biography on Britten, shows.

> Not long ago I attended a formal dinner at a college belonging to one of Britain's most ancient and prestigious universities, and was introduced to the institution's head of house as someone engaged in researching the music of Benjamin Britten. "Really?" came the Master's reply. "There's not much point to the Aldeburgh Festival now that Britten and Pears are both dead, is there?" Before I could respond, the Master had moved swiftly down the line, presumably to impart another morsel of wisdom in whatever subject-area as appropriate to the next guest. After dinner, I sat next to the wife of a senior fellow and was introduced in a similar manner. "Well," she said as she sipped her coffee thoughtfully, "I'm afraid I find Britten's music just too aggressively homosexual, don't you?" This time I managed to issue a sophisticated rejoinder (the single word "Why?", if I remember rightly), upon which she rapidly changed the subject. (1)

While many critics would consider such comments inappropriate, most would agree that Britten's homosexuality does come through in his music. The two people considered to be the leading authorities in this aspect of Britten's life and personality are Philip Brett, who investigated the relationships between Britten's homosexuality and his music in his article "Britten and Grimes" which appeared in the *Musical Times* in 1977, and Humphrey

Carpenter, who detailed some of Britten's encounters in his biography on Britten. The text of the song being discussed here is key to the understanding of the musical setting, for without the text, music takes a complementary role to the text in this question. Here I purport that there is no special musical language that can be called 'homosexual music'.

It is also known that Britten was very fond of children, and that this attraction was quite strong. In the entry on Britten by Brett that appears in the *Grove Dictionary of Musicians*, Brett says:

> … much of his own affectional [sic] and sexual imagination he invested in people younger than himself. In summer of 1938 he renewed contact with Wulff Scherchen[131] (son of the conductor Hermann), who had made an impression four years earlier in Florence. Scherchen, now 18, responded with alacrity and an affair appears to have ensued. Piers Dunkerley, a slightly younger boy whom Britten had met in 1934 while visiting his old preparatory school, brought out a typically parental, advisory streak in the composer: "I am very fond of him – thank heaven not sexual", he wrote, "but I am getting to such a condition that I am lost without some children (of either sex) near me".
>
> … It seems that Britten was captured at many levels by the notion of return to a perfect state symbolized by childhood – it has been called 'innocence', but a more useful concept is that of the 'pre-symbolic' explored by disciples of Lacan or of 'nescience' … The entry into the 'symbolic' (language) and the patriarchal order make this state impossible to recapture, and much of Britten's music is about the difficulty and pain of separation from it, but it is arguably his principal fount of non-verbal inspiration. Lack produces desire (in the already lost adult); and the sexual element that occasionally obtrudes, and can never satisfy or be satisfied, is a symptom of that lack. (qtd. in Sadie 4: 367 – 368)

It can be seen from this excerpt that Britten not only had an attraction to children younger than himself, but at times, he also tried to fill a parental role in those children's lives. Britten's need to fill this role stems from the close relationship he had with his own parents (particularly his mother as mentioned earlier) when he was a child and adolescent. After his mother died, he sought to replace her figure through other people to help him recapture his childhood. Both the poet W.H. Auden and Peter Pears filled this role at different times in his life. In addition, Elizabeth Mayer, with whom Britten lived during his stay in America in 1939, along with several housekeepers throughout his lifetime also filled this role. In turn, he

[131] It was pointed out earlier that Scherchen served as one of Britten's muses during the composition of *Les Illuminations*.

sought to parent those young people with whom he had a close relationship. Thus, the Coleridge poem sets up the conditions for these issues to be exploited in the musical setting.

In Britten's interpretation of "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves", nature is pure and unstained. This comes through in how the musical line flows whenever nature is described. The obbligato harp underlines nature's innocence and purity. The harp is an instrument usually associated with things heavenly or angelic, things pure, without stain or blemish. In addition, Britten uses diatonic chords, although arpeggiated, to highlight this aspect. In his article "Pacifism, Political Action, and Artistic Endeavor", Brett says that, for Britten, diatonic chords are "always a sign of truth and goodness" (183).

The boy, in juxtaposition to the music, is no longer pure. He has lost his innocence, and if one listens closely to the piece, one will hear that whenever the boy is mentioned, the harp is absent. Here there is no purity, no innocence. Instead, the boy is trying to recapture that what was lost. Someone has deceived the boy, but neither Britten nor Coleridge says who or for what reason. The last line, "Has he no friend, no loving mother near?", emphasizes the fact that the boy is lost and needs guidance. As mentioned earlier, this despair, this feeling of loneliness, is displayed by the diatonic tone clusters that are played each time the boy is mentioned. Although diatonic, the cluster is not a chord. The notes have lost their order, or their structure, signifying the lost boy's lost innocence. Only when the mother has been found, or any mother, can the boy regain his innocence.

Moving on to the fourth song, Britten gives a literal interpretation of the poem. He takes the text and gives a musical voice to each animal mentioned. Because of the horn's versatility, Britten is able to represent each animal in the text with a musical voice. Unlike the first three songs, there is no narrator present in the fourth. Here, the animals take the spotlight and their calls and the noises they make is what Britten (and Dekker) intend for us to hear.

Although subtle, I am still of the opinion that my interpretation[132] reflects Britten's interpretation of the poem. I support my argument with Britten's compositional techniques. We know from the rocking, breathing ritornello that the person who fell asleep on the poet's lips in the first song is still sleeping. If it were not so, then the breathing theme would be absent. The rocking theme, which is present throughout the entire song, makes brief pauses when the animals utter their calls. Here, it seems as if the sleeper is aware of the sounds around him, but is unable to wake up. However, the cat's mewing at the end of the song somehow reminds the sleeper of the immortal thoughts the poet makes manifest.

Intermedial Fusion

Turning to intermedial fusion, there are several aspects I would like to explore. Kofi Agawu brings up a few points in his article "The Challenge of Semiotics" that I believe help one understand how the combination of text and music result in a new form. After I have explored these points, I will then put forth argumentation to show how the fusion of text and music makes *Nocturne* a new medial form.

In the first section of his article, Agawu gives 11 reasons to explain why music is a language. I would like focus on five of them, the first being point number three: "Unlike language, music exists only in performance (actual, idealized, imagined, remembered)" (Agawu 142). According to Agawu, due to its communicative function, language can encompass more states of existence than music. Music, however, exists only in performance. Even though speech acts are performative acts, and the fact that some musicians can conceive music in contexts apart from social performance, music still has constraints that make it unique (cf. Agawu 142). When text becomes a part of music, the intent is for it to be

[132] That Lazarillo is experiencing a dream-state.

performed. Very few people can 'hear' the notes that appear on a page and if the text is spoken, all we have is a speech act and not a musical act.

The next point I would like to draw attention to is Agawu's point six: "Although segmentable, the musical text is more continuous in its sonic reality or real-time unfolding than a verbal text. Verbal texts rely more on virtual or physical rests than do musical texts" (143). What Agawu is saying here is that language can be broken up into clear segments governed by punctuation. While text in music also follows rules of punctuation, those rules become subordinate to musical punctuation, i.e. musical cadences, even though this type of punctuation is not so evident (cf. Agawu 143).

> The linear spill-overs, the continuities across formal boundaries, and the complex hierarchies of closure in tonal music: all these confer on the tonal organism a higher degree of interdependence among its parts, an interdependence all the more striking for having fewer direct semantic resonances outside the work. The auditor of tonal music is thus not allowed enough time to ponder other associations, but must follow a train of thought from its inception to its completion. (Agawu 143)

This concept can be applied to the text-music relationship in *Nocturne*. The poetry was written with the conventions of punctuation, which helps the reader to make sense of it. When the poems are set to music, they are affected by the musical punctuation (cadences) in such a way that one may hear new segmentations and new thoughts that did not exist before.

The third point I would like to focus on is Agawu's point seven: "A musical segment (phrase, period, sentence, paragraph, section, movement) exists in two interdependent planes, the plane of succession ('melody') and the plane of simultaneity ('harmony'). Language lacks the place of simultaneity" (143). Agawu is quick to point out here that one should not think that simultaneous activities do not occur in literature or drama, or that there are some musical forms that lack simultaneity. What he is saying is that most musical forms have some degree of simultaneity (cf. 143). Even though it may be possible, it is difficult to think of a text as possessing a melody and a harmony. In music, the melody is linear, whereas the harmony is vertical. This phenomenon is impossible in text. Of course, several people can speak a text at the same time, but this act results in recitation. In order to understand the text, everyone must

speak the same text at the same time, otherwise a cacophony results and meaning is lost. The same, then, is true in *Nocturne*. Because the texts have been set to music, they take on new abilities. The music can be understood at several levels: The text itself communicates a message, which is then enhanced by the melody and supported with harmonies. In this manner, the text and music have become interdependent.

In point eight, Agawu says that "[u]nits of language have more or less fixed lexical meaning, while units of music do not" (144). What this means is that music does not have lexical meaning, which affects its translatability. Even so, this problem is partially solved when text is added to the music. Vocal music has the ability to transmit messages that music alone cannot. Without text, Agawu says that musical meaning must be based on the contracts known to exist between composers and their audiences (cf. 143).

The last point I would like to look as is point nine: "Musical and linguistic meaning (or reference) may be extrinsic or intrinsic. But in music intrinsic meaning predominates over extrinsic meaning, whereas in language it is the other way around" (Agawu 144). Common extrinsic references, Agawu says, are techniques such as leitmotifs, which bear the weight of an assigned reference; word painting, which aspires to the condition of iconic signs; or the depiction of an external reality, such as in Strauss' tone-poems[133]. Intrinsic references could appear "as a dominant-seventh chord indexing a subsequent tonic, a melodic gap prescribing a complementary fill, an opening ritornello indexing solo playing, or an antecedent phrase pointing ahead to a complementary consequent" (Agawu 145). Such references involve internal, or musical knowledge. Again, the fusion of text and music, then, makes both

[133] Strauss composed music based on a wide range of subjects including autobiography, legend, literature, and philosophy. He used his tone poems to bring orchestration to a new height, making it much more complex. He used the orchestra to reflect realism by widening the expressive functions of program music, while simultaneously extending its boundaries. Because of his virtuostic use of orchestration, the descriptive power and vividness of these particular works is extremely marked. The tone poems usually composed for large orchestras, and made use of more than the standard number of instruments. In addition, he often used instrumental effects to reproduce sounds, such as the bleating of sheep with *cuivré* brass as well as flutter tongued reeds in the tone poem, *Don Quixote*.

extrinsic and intrinsic meaning possible, for they work both together and against each other in communicating meaning.

With this background, the focus will now turn to Wolf and his concept of intermedial fusion, which he says results when two or more media are combined. The result of the combination is a new form. Clearly, Britten's *Nocturne* is a good example of intermedial fusion. The two media, when combined, become interdependent. Of course, the poetry and the music have the ability to communicate as separate entities, but the poetic message changes somewhat when music is added; it is strengthened and enhanced, and as I mentioned earlier, a new message results.

If one were to remove the text from the music, the result would be something similar to a thinly-scored orchestral tone poem[134]. Furthermore, if one knew that the tone poem was based on the poetry Britten used, then one could try to imagine how the music represents the texts. This is not impossible, but rather difficult – especially for the layperson, or someone whose knowledge of classical music is limited. In order to ascertain the meaning of the music, the listener would have to know something about Britten's compositional techniques, for example, the harmonic structures he created, and how he used them. The listener would also have to know something about the themes Britten typically employs. It would also be helpful if the listener were familiar with other pieces composed by Britten. Finally, the listener should

[134] Tone poem / symphonic poem is "a descriptive term applied by Liszt to his 13 one-movement orchestral works which, while on a symphonic scale, were not 'pure' symphonies because they dealt with descriptive subjects taken from classical mythology, Romantic literature, recent history, or imaginative fantasy, e.g. *Prometheus Mazeppa*, *Les Preludes*, etc. In other words, they were 'programmatic'. Other composers followed his line, e.g. Smetana (*Wallenstein's Camp*, etc.), Tchaikovsky (*Francesca da Rimini*, etc.), Saint-Seans (*Le Rouet d'Omphale*, etc.), Franck (*Le chasseur maudit*, etc.) and many others. Richard Strauss, who carried pictorialism a stage further, preferred the term *Tondichtung* for his works in this form (*Don Juan*, etc.). This is usually translated as 'tone-poem,' but it has been well suggested that 'sound-poem' comes nearer to the intention. Most late 19th- and early 20th-century composers wrote symphonic poems though they did not always describe them, e.g. Delius's *In a Summer Garden*. Elgar used designation 'concert-overture' for what are in effect 3 symphonic poems, *Froissart*, *Cocaigne*, and *In the South*, and he called *Falstaff* a symphonic study. Later 20th-century composers have shown less interest in the form, but it still survives in such works as Birtwistle's *The Triumph of Time* (1972) and Tippett's *The Rose Lake* (1991 – 3)". (Kennedy and Kennedy 738).

know something about the person, Benjamin Britten. It would be difficult for the listener who does not have this knowledge to understand Britten's music[135].

We can take this a step further and imagine that the listener has the texts at hand (such as in program notes) and could refer to them while listening. While this would help, the person still would be forced to put the text into the music – to imagine where the texts fit. Thus, the texts would implicitly suggest how the music could be interpreted. Consider, for example, the tone poem *The Pines of Rome* by Ottorino Respighi. As with all tone poems, there is no text, but rather distinct sections, which help guide the listener through the piece. *The Pines of Rome* has four distinct sections: *Villa Borghese*, *A Catacomb*, *Janiculum*, and *Appian Way*. Respighi left no text, but he left notes that help not only the listener, but also the performers to better understand the music. From the notes, one can imagine different scenes, which could be thought of as a story. Of course, the details of the story must be created by the listener.

In *Nocturne*, however, the texts are necessary to the meaning. Britten has redefined the texts, which has resulted in a new form, and as it has been shown, the music does not function well, or to its fullest, without the texts. In other words, the setting of the texts to music means that the previously existing medium conventions of the poetry have been changed which allows for new dimensions of perception and experience to be explored (cf. Kattenbelt 25).

I argue that the fusion of the media, poetry, and music in this instance result in what Richard Wagner would consider Gesamtkunstwerk[136]. Along the lines of Wagner, Britten has unified these two arts (media) under the umbrella of music. Through the music, the listener is immersed in the constructed world that comes into being through this particular collection of poems. The poems, alone, do not have the same impact or meaning they do together. Thus,

[135] This does not mean that a person without such knowledge could not enjoy it!

[136] According to Kennedy and Kennedy, Gesamtkunstwerk is Wagner's term signifying a unified work of art, a dramatic work in which drama, music, poetry, song, and paintings should be united into a new and complete art form (cf. 290). Even though *Nocturne* does not contain any visual art, I still claim that it can be called Gesamtkunstwerk because it unites poetry and music, thus creating drama and song.

the whole is more than the sum of its parts. One can imagine how different the song cycle would be, had Britten chosen to use the Sitwell poem "The Youth with the Red-Gold Hair" instead of "Midnight's Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" by Dekker. We can only speculate what the outcome would have been, but we can be certain that the music would have been quite different.

Without going into an in-depth analysis, the Sitwell poem fits the cycle in that it is about a fallen Roman warrior who appears to his beloved. The warrior is not really there, but is part of the wind. It could be that the girl imagines the warrior. It could also be that he does not appear to her visually, but instead, in her mind. Nevertheless, Britten chose not to use this poem for reasons unknown, therefore I will not dwell on it any longer.

Returning to *Nocturne*, my claim is that the collection of these particular poems creates a dream state, or a journey through the mind, as I call it. If one considers the poems as individual pieces, or standalones, then my theory cannot be proved. Only by considering the poems to be connected by the music, in other words, a single entity, does my theory work. Furthermore, only through this particular combination of poetry that Britten chose to set, does this mental world emerge. Bertolt Brecht points out that in a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the spectator (for my purposes, the listener) is under control of "magic", "hypnosis", and "unworthy ecstasy" (cf. Brecht qtd. in Kattenbelt 26). Kattenbelt says that Brecht tried to define the borders within which the listener could create in-between spaces (fill in the gaps), and that this is impossible in a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (cf. 26). I disagree with Brecht here. It is my belief that every listener has the capacity to fill in the gaps. I am not saying that every listener has the knowledge or the tools necessary to fill in the gaps. However, even if the listener has this deficit, the knowledge can be acquired and the proper tools can be forged. Only by melding or fusing the arts together, can the listener fill in the gaps necessary to understand the new form. In *Nocturne*, Britten does just that – he fuses poetry and music to give birth to a new medial form – a form I call the *dramatic song*.

One who listens to *Nocturne* is transported to another place, a place that is not real, but one that is imagined. We can identify with this place because it exists in each one of us. In *Nocturne,* we experience serenity, fear, despair, and nature. If we go back to the definition of media I identified earlier, then it is clear that *Nocturne* is a medial form: it uses a semiotic system (music, which is aural) in the public transmission of its contents. *Nocturne* makes a difference as to what kind of content can be evoked (emotions and feelings), how it is presented, and how it is experienced[137].

Nocturne and Transmediality

While plurimediality is the primary analysis conducted in this study, I will briefly discuss another form of intermediality that can be applied to *Nocturne*, extracompositional intermediality. Recalling Wolf's definition, this type of intermediality can be understood by comparing certain works or signifying phenomena (cf. "Intermediality Revisited" 18). Extracompositional mediality can be divided into transmediality and intermedial transposition. The latter refers to phenomena that are not specific to any one media and, therefore, can exist in more than one medium. The former is applied to similar features or contents that are present in the works of different media, and which, at the same time, clearly come from another medium, and where a transfer between the two media is evident.

For this work, I will focus only on intermedial transposition, for *Nocturne* possesses elements that are not specific to either medium: romantic themes and motives. These include the love of nature, emotionalism, and the supernatural. Although Britten is not considered a Romantic composer, there are elements of Romanticism that come through not only in *Nocturne*, but also in many of his other compositions.

[137] The last two points will be discussed in Chapter 10.

The love of nature can be seen in three of the poems: those penned by Shelley, Coleridge, and Dekker. In the Shelley poem, the love of nature is expressed in lines 7 – 9: "He will watch from dawn till gloom / The lake-reflected sun illume / The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom". In the Coleridge poem lines 5 – 12: "The moon was bright, the air was free, / And fruits and flowers together grew / On many a shrub and many a tree: / And all put on a gentle hue, / Hanging in the shadowy air / Like a picture rich and rare. / It was a climate where, they say, / The night is more beloved than day". The entire Dekker[138] poem, with the exception of the first line, revels in nature. I have already pointed out that the Romantics typically put emphasis on the importance of nature, and one of its characteristics, as shown here, is its beauty that one can find in country life. The Romantics appreciated nature not only for its physical beauty, but also for its ability to help the urban man find his true identity.

Like Romantic poetry, Romantic music also seeks to emphasize nature, emotionalism, and the supernatural. Another element of Romanticism is the pastoral and in *Nocturne*, Britten has found many ways to express it.

Pastoral music usually evokes country life, either explicitly or implicitly. According to Whittall, Britten was able to communicate his "Englishness" to his fellow compatriots with his pastoral techniques employed in the *Serenade* (cf. "The Signs" 363 – 364). Britten also does this in *Nocturne* through simple rhythmic constructions, especially in the first song where the rocking figure is established. In the third song, he uses a flowing line that gently meanders through a musical landscape.

The supernatural exists in the second poem. Here we have the great beast Hafgufa who feeds on large seaworms, ships, and men. We do not know if the beast is evil or not. Perhaps it is just doing that which it was created to do. Nonetheless, Hafgufa meets her end in the apocalyptic fire that destroys the sea. Britten communicates musically both the supernatural existence of the beast and how it rises to the surface to its fiery death.

[138] It should be noted that Dekker is not a Romantic poet, but his poem contains Romantic elements.

The Dekker poem, as mentioned earlier, also contains Romantic elements, the most evident are again, nature, albeit represented as a cacophony of sound. The nightingale is another Romantic motif, because poets from this era see it as a sentient creature, active in the moment of creation, manifesting poetic imagination by varying its song to fit different moods and circumstances (cf. McKusick 35). As mentioned earlier, Britten expresses this Romantic image literally by giving each animal a voice.

Thus, one can see that intermedial transposition, while not very explicit, does exist in Britten's *Nocturne*. However, it has been shown that the most extensive type of intermediality in the piece is plurimediality.

9. The Performer and the Performance as Media

In order for one to experience music, music must be performed. The only way to realize performance is for someone to do it. Many say that there are right ways and wrong ways to perform music, but is that really the case? Is there really a right way or a wrong way to perform a piece of music? What role does the performer have, or what role should the performer have when performing a piece of music? How do different performances affect how one experiences music? These questions are not easy to answer, and the answers can, at times, be subjective. Nonetheless, there are things to consider when performing a piece of music that affect how the piece will be received. In this sense, the performer and the performance both become media, which is the subject of the ensuing chapter

The Medial Performer

Up until recently, many theorists believed that it was the job of the performer to first analyze the music, and from the analysis, reach decisions as to how the piece should be performed. Nicholas Cook reports that theorists such as William Berry and Eugene Namour claim that performers can learn a lot from musical analyses that will help them perform musical works. In fact, they consider it necessary for musical performance and that without analysis the performer cannot adequately perform a piece of music. In other words, these theorists reject the possibility of a reciprocal learning process (cf. 239 – 240). “Namour asserts that ‘It is obvious that if formal relations are not properly analyzed by the performer, as well as carefully delineated in the performance itself, then many negative consequences follow” (Cook, “Analysing Performance” 240). Cook goes on to say that Namour often dictates what

a performer must or must not do, and that Namour often determines if a performance has been correctly performed or not (cf. "Analysing Performance" 240).

> Namour exclaims in exasperation that 'Sometimes conductors do utterly inexplicable things that make no sense at all', instancing a performance of the *Rosenkavalier Suite* by André Previn. Such a sentiment may be understandable enough. But what is striking about it from a methodological point of view is the readiness with which Namour is prepared to abandon the attempt to understand what performers do; theory, it seems, is not committed to understanding performers in the way it is to understanding composers. (Have you ever heard a theorist say, 'Sometimes composers do utterly inexplicable things that make no sense at all'?) The assumption that theory exerts some kind of hegemony over performance is so entrenched that Namour simply doesn't consider the possibility that the failure to understand what a performer does might be a reflection on the theory rather than on the performance. ("Analysing Performance" 240 – 241)

Thus, Cook has identified a fundamental problem – that many believe that the composer has the final word in performance practice and interpretation, and that the performer is beholden to what the composer has indicated. Cook mentions that Namour focuses on the role of the performer as simply being a link between the manner in which a composer conceives a piece of music, and the manner in which the listener receives it. In other words, the performer should have no say in how the piece should be performed. By conducting a theoretical analysis of a piece, the performer will be able to express the composer's wishes. Likewise, Cook points out that another theorist, Fred Lerdahl, focuses on specifying the conditions that must be fulfilled if there is to be consistency between compositional grammar and listening grammar. In both instances, the result is that the performer has been removed from the communicative process. The musician has been eliminated as an individual, and has been replaced with a theory whose input is some kind of musical text, and whose ultimate output is an aesthetic judgement. In this model, the performer is not allowed to express the structure of the music. Instead, music expresses itself (cf. Cook, "Analysing Performance" 241 – 242).

Cook rejects this notion by claiming that the performer needs to be included in the communicative process. The performer should be given a voice and be allowed to make decisions as to how a piece could be performed. Cook sees performance expression – the

unsystematized transformation of notated pitches, dynamics, and articulation – as an aesthetically foundational aspect of music that should be considered. Doing so would then create a relationship between the musical notation and its performances. In such a relationship, both composers and performers work together to create and maintain the repertory. Furthermore, performers could engage in analytical dialogue as artistic and intellectual equals, not as intellectual inferiors who needed to learn pieces of music from theorists (cf. Cook, "Analysing Performance" 244 – 245). By involving the performer in the decision-making process, the activity of performing music would be put back into its proper place. Jonathan Dunsby says that

> [u]nderstanding and trying to explain musical structure is not the same kind of activity as understanding and communicating music. [There is] a rather simple distinction, one which is often overlooked, between interpretation and performance. A particular analysis may well lead to the conviction that a particular kind of interpretation is essential, but how to convey that interpretation to the listener in performance is a different matter. (qtd. in Cook, "Analysing Performance" 246).

Of course, there are things in a musical score that are not open to interpretation: harmonic progressions, intervals, neighboring and chromatic tones, and key modulations. However, Cook points out that looking *only* at these musical elements to dictate performance is too simplistic in that it requires a one-to-one mapping of analysis and performance onto each other. He argues that performance must be seen as a source of signification on its own because performance is a source of musical meaning (cf. Cook, "Analysing Performance" 247).

Therefore, the performer must be an integral part in relaying the message created by the composer to the audience. To emphasize his claim, Cook points out that when recording companies advertise CDs, especially classical music where one piece of music may be sold by several record companies, "it is usually the performer, as an individual who is marketed, not the work" ("Analysing Performance" 245). For example, if I wanted to buy a recording of Mozart Arias for soprano, I probably would buy one featuring Kathleen Battle, Anne Sofie

von Otter, Diana Damrau, or Renée Fleming, all of whom are known for their interpretations of Mozart, as opposed to someone like Leontyne Price, Angela Gheorghiu, Renate Tebaldi who are known for their interpretations of Verdi. Cook's claim falls into line with Chapple's on the importance placed on the performer when communicating music. Musicians (for this study, singers) must process the music while performing it. They physically produce an aural representation of what is on the page. For classical music, this means that the singer must have knowledge of certain musical conventions, such as reading and interpreting notation, and that the singer must understand the cultural conventions from which the piece of music stems. The singer can then interpret the music as he or she sees fit and communicates a message to the audience. In doing so, the singer mediates the message created by the composer, interprets that message, and presents the interpretation to the audience. Chapple says that music is an abstract art form, based on mathematical structures and harmonic conventions that relate to an awareness of another reality prompted by different combinations of sound and rhythm (cf. 85). Singers must take these structures and conventions, combine them with words, emotion, and meaning, and negotiate them while singing. She says that

> singing affects the whole body and not just the vocal chords. The singer operates *in-between* the cognitive and the affective domain. Their intermediality is located in the interplay between the music and the words; the irrational … and the rational …, performed in the live space at the same time. The singers are the intermedial interface between theatre and music in performance. They mediate the mediality of music, and they are conscious of their position on the stage as being *in-between* the conductor and the director, as well as *in-between* the musical score, the libretto and the audience, to whom they communicate. (Chapple 87)

Of course, Chapple is referring to opera here, but this notion can be applied to other vocal music forms as well, including the art song. Taking *Nocturne* as an example, the singer mediates in-between the conductor (for this is an orchestral song cycle), the musical score (the composer), and the audience. The job of the art song singer is not much different from the opera singer. Just like the opera singer, the art song singer must continually negotiate the intermediality of the medium of speech and the medium of music. According to Chapple, the

singer mediates the intermedial form. Art singers memorize the music and usually the text as well; they process that information for tone and pitch, rhythm, and musical dynamics, and then communicate the package to the audience. It takes a high degree of skill for the singers to mediate their vocal technique using the composer's text, and the conductor's rhythms and tempi. Thus, the singer is an intermedial performer, who has to maintain a direct and emotional response to the music (cf. Chapple 86).

Patrik Juslin says that the performer helps to create emotion in music, which is then communicated to the listener. He states that there is vast difference in how performers go about using acoustic means to express and recognize emotions, and that performers encode emotions by means of uncertain, but partially redundant cues (or rather sources of information). The emotions are then decoded (recognized) by the listener who uses the same cues to judge the emotional expression. The cues are uncertain in that they are not reliable indicators of the intended emotional expression. As a result, the listener must combine the cues in flexible ways to arrive at reliable judgments of the expression (cf. Juslin 1798).

Thus, performers have different means to communicate particular emotions. The ability to communicate rests largely on the information that both the performer and the listener share. The more similar that knowledge is, the easier it is for the performer to achieve communication of the intended emotions. Even in instances where performers use information differently, it is still sometimes possible to evoke the same emotion in the listener. However, the way the performer uses these cues in combination with variations from what is prescribed by notation has a significant role in how the listener interprets the message being sent.

Having shown how the singer functions as a medium and is an integral part of the communication process, I will now explore if there is a 'right way' or a 'wrong way' to perform music. To begin this discussion, I again reference Cook.

> What might be called 'structurally informed performance,' as urged by Berry or Namour, aims, then, at a more or less literal translation of the product of analysis. I have no wish to deny that such a style of performance is possible, or indeed that it may be a valid option (although structurally informed

> performance can all too easily verge on the patronizing or … pedantic). But the point is precisely that it is an option, which is to say that there are other options, and this is something that cannot be formulated in terms of the dualistic language of 'expressing', 'projecting', and 'bringing out' structure. … Berry refers to structurally informed performance as 'edifying', 'illumined', and 'illuminating'; the real point, however, is not so much the implicit value-judgement, but the fact that he has no other language for talking about performance. ("Analysing Performance" 249)

Cook is very critical of Berry and Namour here, and clearly says that performing a piece of music based on sound theoretical analysis is not the only way to perform a piece, rather it is an option. Since this is an option, there must be other ways to perform a piece of music. Another method is the one put forth by Rosenwald, mentioned by Cook in his article. If a performer is familiar with a theoretical analysis of a piece of music, then he or she can enter into a dialogue with an analyst as to how the piece could be performed. Taking into consideration, then, both the composer and the performer, other performance options would emerge. For example, after having analyzed a piece of music, the performer and analyst may reach a conclusion that a performance could be developed that logically goes against the inherent structure of the piece (cf. Cook, "Analysing Performance" 250).

However, Cook puts forth another option. He says that "musical performance involves negotiating between the demands of physical gesture and sound and those of notation and its associated verbal traditions" ("Analysing Performance" 251), which echoes what Chapple said in her article discussed earlier. However, Cook expands on this notion by saying that a musical score is a concretization of the contingent, a singular encounter between sound and notation, and that the language used with it and realized in performance has its own logic and agenda; this dichotomy leads to the divergence between theory and practice (cf. "Analysing Performance" 251). Many people believe that if performers do not do what the music instructs they should do, then the music has been incorrectly, or badly, interpreted. This view assumes that music is prescriptive. However, it should be descriptive. For example, a rubato to Mozart did not mean the same thing to Chopin. A ritardando may mean one thing to one person and a different thing to another person. Furthermore, a Baroque forte is not executed in the same

manner as a Romantic forte. Each musical period can be identified by its performance practices, but the performer has the liberty to interpret these practices in a way in which he or she sees fit.

It is, therefore, up to the performer to use theoretical *and* conventional knowledge to appropriately interpret a piece of music. If there is sound reason for the performer to go against the structure of a piece, then why not do so? In this sense, then, there is no definitive way to perform a piece of music. Instead, there are many options a performer has, which, when based on sound theory and experience, help him or her determine how to perform a piece of music. Again, the performer mediates, and processes the music conceived by the composer to the audience.

Performance as a Medium

As we have seen thus far, the singer is a medium who mediates the composer's message and communicates an interpreted version of that message to an audience. In doing so, the performance itself becomes a medium, for the performance is the vehicle through which the singer transmits the message. I would like, in this section, to discuss two types of performance: the live performance and the recorded performance.

In my opinion, the live performance is much more difficult for the singer to master than the recorded performance. This is because in the live performance the singer not only mediates the composer's message to the audience, but also mediates the audience's response to the message. If the audience is small and intimate, the performer must mediate the performance differently than if the audience were large. The audience communicates to the performer mainly non-verbally, and when the singer is able to see individual members of the

audience smile or give an approving nod[139], the singer interprets such signs as positive and the performance being received well. Conversely, a frown or a bobbing head may signify displeasure with the performance. If the audience is small, the singer is able to react to such signals and *may*[140] be able to change the performance accordingly.

If the performance takes place in a large hall, where the singer is on a stage and can see little of the audience (usually due to lighting or distance), then the singer receives little to no feedback. Theoretically, this type of performance is more difficult to navigate because the singer has no direct contact with the audience. Only when the performance is over will the singer know whether it has been received well or not. This is usually recognized through applause. It is often said that the performer lives for applause, because applause is the vehicle through which the audience can express its reception of the performance.

During the performance, the singer's main job is to transmit, or communicate, a message to the listener. This is accomplished through body gestures, vocal technique, dynamics, and other musical conventions. The medial performer must transport the listener to another place.

How an audience reacts to, or understands, a performance has a lot to do with its foreknowledge of the piece of music, with the genre to which the piece of music belongs, and with its expectations of the performance. Let us look at each of these points in detail.

Like texts in intertextuality, music is also interpreted through a complex of relationships between the music, the listener, hearing, and history, namely, the history that is inscribed in the language of the music and in the history that is carried in the listener's listening (adapted[141] from Plottel and Charney 15). Being familiar with a certain piece of

[139] In essence, what we have here is the concept of semiotics at work.

[140] Of course, if the performance is rehearsed and follows a specific plan, it may be impossible for the singer to change anything at all. However, if the performance lends itself to improvisation or if the singer has rehearsed alternatives, then these may be able to be employed.

[141] I say here adapted because Plottel and Charney are not referring to music, but to written texts.

music is like a two-edged sword: it can be both a blessing and a curse. Take, for example, a music critic who knows every word and every chord of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. That person would have quite a different experience in witnessing a performance of the work as opposed to someone who is hearing it for the first time. The critic would use her knowledge of previous performance experiences and her knowledge of the score to evaluate the performance. However, the person who has no knowledge of the piece would be ill equipped to do that. He would most likely be able to say if he liked the music or not, but this judgment would be based solely on the performance he was able to witness.

The novice could, perhaps, evaluate the piece of music on the basis of his knowledge of other pieces that share the same genre: for example, if the novice were going to a performance of *Dichterliebe* for the first time, then he could use his knowledge of the song cycles *Liederkreis* and *Frauenlieben und Leben* by Schumann or *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise* by Schubert as a basis for evaluating the piece. Of course, such a comparison is only possible if the novice has knowledge of the other pieces. If not, then again, the performance will be the sole basis for evaluation.

However, the most important criteria for being able to understand a performance are the listener's expectations of the performance. When a person goes to a concert, it is usually either because the person knows something about the performer(s), the composer, the piece(s) of music being performed or some combination of all three, or the person wishes to find out something about the performer(s), the composer, the piece(s) of music to be performed. The experienced listener will hear the music differently than the listener who knows little to nothing about the piece. In the latter situation, the listener may rely on the opinion of someone else to help him or her evaluate the piece.

Many times, a novice or first-time listener may have one impression of a piece, which is then changed or even challenged by a more experienced listener. For example, if I were to attend a concert of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with a friend who has never heard it, I may

inadvertently influence my friend's reception of the piece. Since I have not only heard the *Mass* performed a number of times, but have also sung in it myself, my interpretation of the performance may be very different from that of my friend. If, after the concert, my friend turns to me and says, "What a wonderful concert that was?", and I, because of my experience with the piece offer a different opinion, I may change how my friend perceives the concert.

Wolfgang Iser makes a profound point when he says that

> [c]ommunication … is a process set in motion and regulated, not by a given code, but by a mutually restrictive and magnifying interaction between the explicit and the implicit, between revelation and concealment. What is concealed spurs the [listener] into action, but this action is controlled by what is revealed; the explicit in its turn is transformed when the implicit has been brought to light. Whenever the [listener] bridges the gaps, communication begins. (1676)

I have taken the liberty to replace the word "reader" with "listener" because the same principle applies to music. I claim that even though the singer mediates the performance, the listener must fill in the gaps that the singer leaves open. Thus, the listener must meet the singer halfway so that communication can take place.

Another point I would like to bring up is the inherent problem of talking about music. Once communication has taken place, it is common to talk about what has been communicated. When we talk about music, we attempt to put abstractions into words, and as a result, we often find the task daunting. Even though theoretical knowledge helps in such situations, it is not always adequate. Cook says it best when he claims that one of the problems with talking about music is that our language in talking about music is one of representation.

> What it means is that our language for music is not monolithic, but draws its signification from any number of alternative representations of music, each of which constitutes sound as a different intentional object. Each 'music view', as it might be called, captures different aspects of actual or potential experience; each allows generalization across a different range of contexts. If we have a problem with this linguistic pluralism, it arises from the tendency to identify the representation with what is represented – in short, the tendency towards fundamentalism. The consequence is the positing of a dominant representation that denies the possibility of alternatives. And that is where … a performative perspective comes in. If we think of analysis, or for that matter any musicology, in terms of what it does and not just what it represents, then we have a semantic plane that can accommodate any number of metaphorical representations of music. We can negotiate between different meanings, however different the

> representations upon which they draw. And the result is to alleviate the greatest danger attendant upon the alignment of words with music, which is that of premature closure. ("Analysing Performance" 258)

This underlies my claim that interpreting music is subjective and will almost always differ from person to person. However, this does not change the fact that a musical performance is a medium. It functions similarly to a text in that is a conventionally and culturally distinct means of communication. This communication is specified not only by particular technical or institutional channels, but primarily by employing all five semiotic systems (linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, and spatial) in the public transmission of its contents that include, but are not restricted to, referential messages, as have been mentioned above.

The Remediated Performance

As I have pointed out, how one understands or perceives a live performance has a lot to do with how the music is presented, as well as with the relationship the performer establishes with the audience. However, in a recorded performance, this relationship between performer and audience does not exist. How, then, does a recorded performance affect communication and listener understanding?

Toward the end of the last century Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, coined a new term used to describe media that "refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (Finke and Shichtman 140). Using this definition, we can say that recorded music is a remediation of a musical performance, whether it is live or not because it is the representation of one medium (the live performance) in another medium (the recording).

One can find recordings of just about every kind of music that exists, and in classical music, one can usually find a multitude of recordings of any well-known piece of music[142]. How have recordings changed how we receive musical messages? How have they changed our perception of the musical experience and the live performance?

Indeed, recordings have revolutionized music. Up until the beginning of the 20th century, music was a medium that only existed in live performance. Since Edison made it possible to record sound, the recording has made it possible to experience music without it being performed live. What was once a social event has been transformed to something that can be experienced privately or in small, intimate groups.

According to Bolter and Grusin, older media can be highlighted and represented in digital form without appearing ironic or criticizing. They cite as examples the CD-ROM (DVD / Blu-ray), picture galleries, and collections of literary texts. Their example is focused on the internet and web sites where people can download pictures or texts. Here the electronic medium is not in opposition to the original medium; instead, it makes it possible for people to gain access to the older materials, as if the content of the older media could be poured into the new one. The digital medium tries to become invisible, so that the person using it has the same relationship to the content as he would if he were confronting the original medium (cf. Bolter and Grusin 45).

In the same way, the CD tries to present a musical performance in such a way that the listener feels as if he were experiencing a live performance. However, this feat is not always accomplished. In the early days of music recording, the recorders tried to duplicate the live performance, but over time, people began to have a different impression of recorded music, especially recorded classical music. Live performances are rarely perfect, meaning that there may be a few out-of-tune notes, a key entrance may be missed, or someone may cough at a

[142] Oftentimes, pieces that are not widely known will also have been recorded multiple times by any number of performers. Then there are pieces that have been recorded only once or even not at all.

critical moment – things that are uncontrollable in a live performance. Nevertheless, with the advent of digital technology, such imperfections can be eliminated and the listener expects, when buying a digital recording of a piece of classical music, that it will be perfect. Such expectations have also been transferred upon live performances. Today, there seems to be little to no tolerance for the imperfections that inherently occur in live performances. Instead, many people want to hear a live performance that is CD-perfect, and are sometimes disappointed when they do not.

What does this do to the communication process? Is there communication at all when a person listens to recorded music? The answer, of course, is yes, but the communication is much different.

In their quest to produce the most perfect recording possible, the performer (or singer for purposes of this study) has many opportunities to better the performance. The singer is still a mediator, but there is no interaction with the audience. The singer communicates only that which he or she believes to be appropriate for the music. Singers do this by trying to incorporate emotion in their vocal interpretations. If the singer is successful, then the listener will be able to fill in the gaps necessary to build a bridge so that the message can come across.

However, the message received by the listener may not be the message the singer intended. As with a live performance, the pre-knowledge that the listener brings to the piece will help him make sense of the recording. Since there is no visual communication, the listener has to rely only on what he hears. That in and of itself is revolutionary because the listener has access to the recorded music whenever he wants. As a result, he can familiarize himself with the recording. He can also purchase recordings of the same work by other artists. In doing so, the listener mediates the different performances on his way to becoming a connoisseur of not only that one particular piece, but of other pieces he may wish to learn and enjoy.

Of course, the experience is quite different if the listener happens to watch a video recording of said piece of music. In such instances, the listener has the opportunity to see the performance, which can influence how the he or she interprets the music. However, the experience is constrained in that the person viewing the performance sees what the editor wants to show. As a result, the viewer / listener cannot decide what to focus on and the experience is considered to be manipulated. Therefore, the message communicated may not be what the singer intended.

In the end, no matter how interesting, enjoyable, comfortable, or well accepted it is, the recorded performance will always borrow from live performance. Recorded performances were not conceived with digital media in mind, and as a result, they cannot exploit the special qualities that are unique to live worlds. Yet, it is exactly those unique qualities that have begun to define entirely new languages of expression, and those same languages will tap the potential of digital media as new vehicles of expression. Remediated music performances are one way for people to have access to a language they may never have known. The live performance will probably never be replaced, but rather, through recordings, they will most likely be attended by listeners who are better educated, and better equipped to engage in the communication process with the performer. In other words, the listener will become a mediator.

10. A Tale of Two Performances

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, there is no right way or wrong way to perform a piece of music. As a result, it can be difficult to evaluate and analyze a musical performance. In my opinion, the best method of evaluating and analyzing a musical performance, be it live or recorded, is to examine how the performer has interpreted the musical score. We have seen that one of the responsibilities of the performer is to conduct an analysis of the piece while entertaining different ideas as to how the theoretical concepts can be implemented, or not.

For my analysis, I will pay attention to things such as tempo, dynamics, articulation, and musical expression (both vocal and instrumental). I have chosen two recordings to analyze: the first, a recording by tenor, Peter Pears with Benjamin Britten conducting the London Symphony Orchestra (Britten, perf. Pears), and the second by tenor, Ian Bostridge with Sir Simon Rattle conducting the Berliner Philharmoniker (Britten, perf. Bostridge). The first recording was chosen because I wanted to hear how Britten and Pears interpreted the work[143]. The second recording was chosen because it is a relatively recent recording and would serve well as a comparison.

Since Britten was rather specific with his tempi markings, there is not much room for interpretation. When comparing the two recordings, one notices that the first two songs are almost the same in length. The Pears "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" is 3:23, while the Bostridge recording is 3:21; the Pears "Kraken" is 3:18, and the Bostridge 3:19. Even though the duration of the songs seems to be rather short, when put into the perspective of how many measures each piece has[144], one notices that the songs are actually quite slow. The duration of

[143] Britten wrote the vocal part with Pears in mind.

[144] "On a Poet's Lips I Slept" consists of 43 measures, and "The Kraken" consists of 54 measures, eight of which restate the ritornello at the end of the song.

the second two songs, however, is rather different. The Pears "Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" is 2:12 and his "Midnight Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting" is 2:30. The Bostridge times are 2:37 and 2:19 respectively. Britten gives a ranged tempo marking for the third piece and simply "as at the start" for the fourth song. However, the Bostridge tempo for the third song is somewhat slower than the marking given, but, nonetheless, very effective. With the slower tempo, the waltz feeling comes across better than it does in the Pears recording. Even though the tempo for the fourth song of the Bostridge recording is somewhat faster than the Pears recording, in my opinion, it is still too slow. I believe the song would have been more effective had Britten assigned it a faster tempo. This, in my opinion, would have made the sounds of the night animals seem more hectic, which is what I think Dekker may have had in mind with the song.

The next area I would like to examine is dynamic expression. Even though the dynamics are clearly marked, they can be interpreted differently. For example, what one person considers a *forte*, could be what another considers a *mezzo forte*. In this sense, then, dynamics are relative, and this is evident in the Pears and Bostridge interpretations. The cycle begins with a triple piano in the upper strings, but the Pears ***ppp*** is not a soft as the Bostridge ***ppp***. As a result, the emphasis in the first few measures is immediately placed on Bostridge's voice. That is not to say that Pears' voice is covered up by the strings, it is not, but his voice seems to be somewhat softer than Bostridge's. In both recordings, the dynamics in the accompaniment is relatively static and never increases in volume until the second song begins. The vocal dynamic is at piano for the entirety of first song, but Britten gives the voice crescendo and decrescendo markings to help with expressivity. Both Pears and Bostridge exploit the crescendo and decrescendo markings to give contour to the vocal line and to emphasize the climax of the song, which happens in measures 12 and 13. The end of the first song is actually the beginning of the second. The bassoon serves as a pivot between the songs,

creeping softly in both recordings, and during its trill, crescendos to a ***ff***. Again, in the Bostridge recording, dynamic range is greater than in the Pears recording.

The wider dynamic range in the Bostridge recording continues into the second song and is evident in both the voice and in the ostinato figure in the double basses and bassoon. However, both recordings display great sensitivity to dynamics and one can hear that the musicians have adhered to Britten's markings, even with the differences in interpretation.

The dynamics are similar in the third song as well. However, in the Bostridge recording, the double basses are more prominent than in the Pears recording. This does not mean that they are overpowering in the Bostridge recording, but one can hear them better than in the other recording. The result is a better foundation for the harmonic structure of the piece.

However, the greatest difference between the two recordings concerning dynamics is in the fourth song. Here again, the Bostridge recording displays a wider range of dynamics and Rattle has interpreted the expressive spots as crescendi and decrescendi. The result is that the listener comes to the conclusion that these spots are rather important because they are markedly different from the rest of the piece.

Overall the Bostridge / Rattle recording displays more sensitivity to dynamics and interprets the markings differently than does the Pears / Britten recording. In conducting the analysis of dynamics, I could not help but wonder if the difference might be the result of recording techniques. In the 1960s when the Pears recording was made, there were no digital recording devices, everything was analogue. In addition, the performers were more than likely situated at a greater distance from the microphones than in the later recording, which was made in 2005. I doubt that Pears sang directly into the microphone, something that is expected of singers in today's recording practices. Furthermore, it is also modern recording practice that instrumental groups are given their own microphone, so for the Bostridge recording, it is more than likely that the 1st violins had a microphone, the 2nd violins had their own microphone, etc. Because of the advanced recording techniques in 2005, the musicians are

able to perform the dynamics in the same manner as in the 1960s, but the dynamics sound as if they have a wider range and more intensity in the later recording. It would be interesting to hear a recording of Pears and Britten performing *Nocturne* with modern recording equipment and techniques. I am certain that the dynamic range would be very similar to that of the Bostridge recording.

One aspect of musical performance that is not influenced by recording techniques is articulation. How music is articulated is largely the result of how one interprets the articulation markings, and in the two recordings I have chosen, there are instances where the articulation of the text is executed much differently[145].

In the first song, Peter Pears sings the text mostly connected, and does not put much emphasis on the initial plosive consonants. This creates a lyrical feeling, as if the sounds meld into each other. Ian Bostridge emphasizes some plosive consonants, but not others. At the same time, he has a tendency to put glottal stops before words that begin with a vowel sound, such as "I" in measure three, "adept" in measure five, "illume" in measure 19, "ivy" in measure 21, and "immortality" in measure 37. However, he elides "the aëreal" in measure 10 and "of immortality" in measures 35 and 36. Although the difference is subtle, it makes the text easier to understand, but risks breaking the continuity of the line. In both recordings, the intervocalic consonants (plosives and fricatives, for example) are clearly articulated, as well as the initial nasal consonants. Such execution is important in that it helps the listener to understand the text.

The rhythmic notation of the second song dictates the articulation of the text, and both singers take advantage of this feature, such that there is no difference in the articulation. Here each consonant sound is clearly articulated and instances where a "the" precedes a word beginning with a vowel sound, the [ðə] is changed phonetically to [ðiː] (which is phonetically correct) and is then elided to the following word with an intrusive /ɹ/. The intrusive /ɹ/ is also

[145] I will discuss the notational articulation together with musical expression.)

inserted when a word ends with a vowel sound and the following word begins with a vowel sound. In other instances, continuity is achieved by linking final consonants to words beginning with vowel sounds. Although this occurs in natural speech, in the song, the rhythm helps to emphasize the consonant sounds in the text and this gives the overall song a very strong majestic feeling.

The third song is articulated differently by the two singers. The first thing one notices when listening to the song, is that Pears tends to sing the staccato eighth-notes more as sustained staccatos, whereas Bostridge tends to put more space between the notes. This is probably the direct result of the difference in tempi of the two songs. Because the Pears recording is faster, the staccato eighth-notes do not sound as short as those executed by Bostridge. As far as the articulation for the lyric sections of the piece, Pears sings the lines much more connected than does Bostridge. As in the first song, Bostridge inserts glottal stops before “and” in measures 120, 121, 123, and 124. Strangely enough, he does not insert a glottal stop before the “and” in measure 144. My first impression was that Bostridge was trying to separate the lines of the poem with the glottal stops, but the “and” in measures 121 and 123 is situated in the middle of the line, and he inserts no glottal stop before “On” in measure 122. Therefore, his reason for the glottal stop is unclear.

Like the first and third songs, the fourth song is articulated differently by the two singers. Again starting with Pears, he tends to be somewhat imprecise in articulating the text. For example, on the word “goes” in measures 153 and 168, he leaves off the final voiced consonant, so that the word sounds like “go” instead. He also does not articulate the final unvoiced consonant of the words “not” in measure 157, “But” in measure 158, and “twit” in measures 160 and 161. The final unvoiced consonant on the word “peep” in measures 168 and

169 is a stop instead of a plosive[146]. He does, however, emphasize the initial /r/ in the words "Raven" and in the /kr/ consonant cluster in the words "croak" and "cry" in measures 163 and 165. Furthermore, the way Pears articulates the initial unvoiced plosive /t/ as a voiced plosive instead so that the word "ting" in measures 153 – 155, the consonant sounds more like "ding" instead. Because he does not clearly articulate all the consonant sounds in the text, some words are difficult to understand. This can impact how the listener interprets the text (a point which I will discuss later).

Unlike his colleague, Bostridge tends to articulate every consonant sound precisely. He even puts emphasis on the glottal fricative /h/ in the word "howl" in measure 131, which gives the impression that the dogs are present. However, like Pears, Bostridge articulates the final unvoiced consonant on the word "peep" as a stop instead of a plosive.

The last area I would like to discuss is musical expression. The singers, the conductor, and the instrumental soloist all have important roles in the interpretation of the music. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the performers mediate the notes and instructions they see on the page and transform them into a musical message that is then transmitted to the listener. This mediation is also referred to as musical expression.

In the first song, the string accompaniment creates a musical picture that serves as a background for the vocal solo. We can equate the strings to the background in an impressionist painting where the background is a myriad of pastel colors that seem to be blended together, but, at the same time, retain their individuality. The background is unobtrusive and draws no attention to itself, but nonetheless, it is necessary because it helps create the mood of the piece. In the foreground of this musical painting is the voice whose main function is to communicate the text. The way the singers achieve this is actually quite similar. Both singers break the text up into smaller phrases, and, in turn, each phrase is given

[146] Some may take issue that I make a difference between a stop and a plosive when they actually belong to the same class of consonants. By referring to a stop, I am indicating that the air is stopped by the production of the consonant, whereas in a plosive, a small burst of air is released when the consonant is produced.

contour or shape. We can think of these shapes as a landscape made of up rolling hills and valleys – some longer or higher than others. Some hills and valleys even seem to grow out of, or fade into others. Together the foreground and the background become interdependent such that one cannot exist without the other.

As the singers present the text, they determine which phrases should be given more emphasis. They bring attention to these phrases with rising and falling dynamics, the peaks being sung louder, and the valleys softer. Listening carefully to the piece, one will here two climatic points in the Bostridge recording and one in the Pears recording. In the Bostridge recording there is a climax in measure 13 on the word "wildernesses". Britten scores the piece such that the climax is natural with a long phrase that crescendos over six measures. The phrase is made up of three sections. The first section is in measures 8 and 9. The second section consists of measures 9 and 10, and the last section consists of measures 10 – 13. The second section is higher than the first, and the third is higher than the preceding sections and it is as long as the other two sections combined (Fig. 11). Bostridge then accentuates the climax in measure 13 by putting weight on the three accented notes.

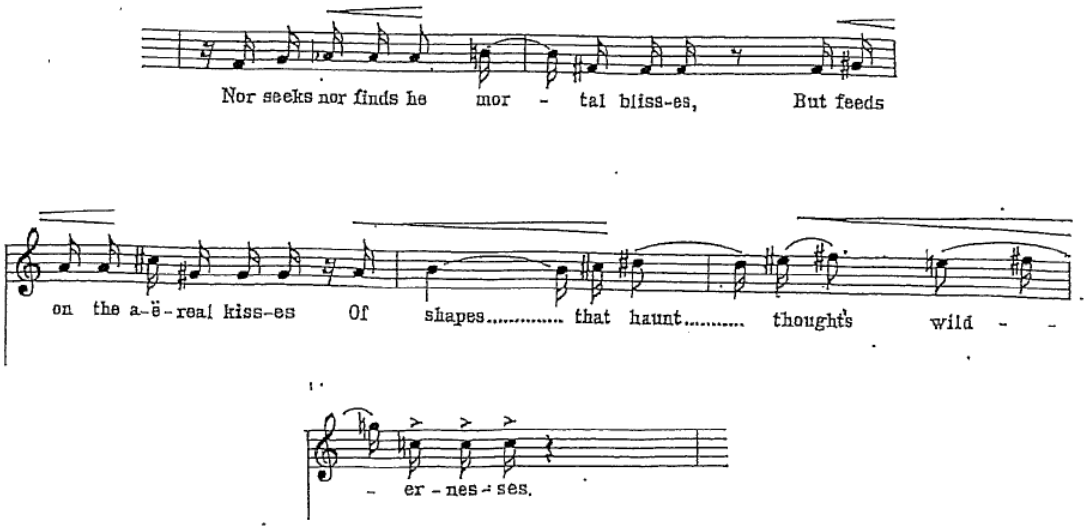

Fig. 11: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 8 – 13 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 104 - 105). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

The next composite phrase takes place in measures 16 – 24 (Fig. 12). It is similar to the previous composite phrase; however, the highpoint of the phrase is not as dramatic as the preceding phrase, and the decline is longer. The last phrase, which is also the second climax (for Pears the first climax) begins in measure 34 and continues through measure 39 (Fig. 13). The zenith occurs on the G in the word "Nurslings" in measure 35. The second high point in the phrase occurs in the syllable "im-" in the subsequent measure. The phrase then gradually ends with a long decrescendo on the 11-note melisma that ends the song.

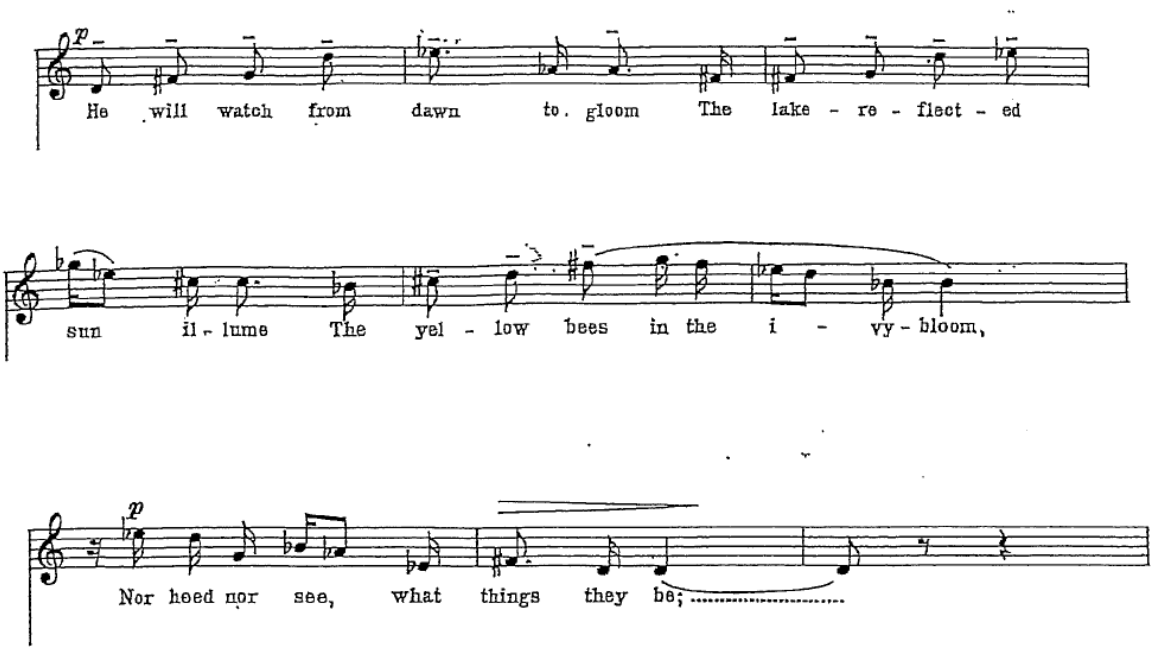

Fig. 12: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 16 – 24 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 105 - 106). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

The second song, as mentioned previously is very dramatic not only in how it appears on the page, but also in how it is presented on both recordings. Again, the orchestra paints a background picture, but this time the mood is anything but quiet and serene. With the minor key, and the broad ostinato figure in the double basses and the bassoon, over which the upper strings pluck pizzicato notes, the background takes on a dark, mysterious, brooding character. The opening figure of the bassoon in the Bostridge recording in measure 43 is played very broadly and deliberately. The same figure in the Pears recording is just a tick faster than in the

Bostridge recording, but the effect is the same. With regard to the vocal line, both singers take advantage of their dynamic palettes, but there are differences in how some of the notes sung, in how accents are sung, and how the glissando is employed.

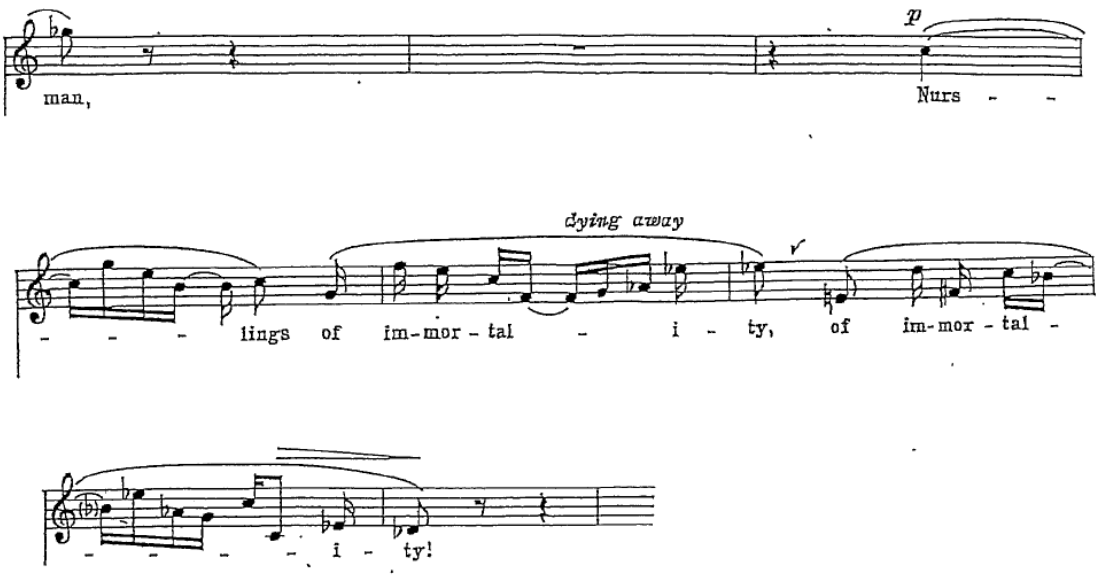

Fig. 13: Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne*, Op. 60, measures 32 – 39 (Britten, *Works for Voice and Orchestra* 108 - 109). (C) COPYRIGHT 1959 BY HAWKES & SON (LONDON) LTD. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Boosey & Hawkes Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin

In measure 48, neither Pears nor Bostridge sing the first C. Instead, both singers substitute a Db for the C. The reason is unknown. Pears also deviates from the score once again in measure 84. Here, instead of singing the D#, he chooses to stay on the E. In measure 84, however, Bostridge sings what is printed in the score. The note changes, however, are hardly noticeable and none of them adds nor subtracts anything from the message transmitted to the listener.

Concerning the accents printed in the score, Pears sings mainly what is in the score adding accents on the words "gi-" in measure 71, "the" in measure 81, and "men" in measure 82. Bostridge is much more free with his interpretation and puts additional accents on the F in the word "Kraken" in measure 55, on "faint-" and "sun-" in measures 58 and 59, on "spon-" and "-len-" in measures 62 and 63, on "gi-" in measure 71, and on "a-", "sea-", and "men" in measures 74, 77, and 82 respectively. When one compares the use of accents on the two

recordings, one will notice that the accents added by Bostridge make the piece sound more dramatic and adventurous. It is as if the listener is being told a wonderful tale, and is hanging on every word in anticipation of what is to come next. While the Pears recording is also skilfully executed, it does not have the same dramatic feeling that the Bostridge recording exudes.

With regard to the special techniques, namely the slides and glissandi, Pears completely ignores the glissando in measure 54, but adds one between "hath" and "he" in measure 74. Bostridge observes the glissando in measure 54 and exaggerates the sliding in measures 68 – 71. Both men sing the final A in falsetto, which gives the impression that the kraken is helpless and doomed. Here again, I must say that the Pears recording is an excellent recording to listen to, but the Bostridge interpretation of the second song is much more dramatic and captivating than the Pears recording.

In the third song, the mood changes again, and this time the string orchestra paints a background where figures that are barely recognizable appear to be dancing. The harp, as mentioned before, sounds heavenly and the listener is transported to a place that is jolly – most of the time. When the orchestra plays the tone clusters, the feeling of happiness is lost for a moment. The listener is annoyed because he senses that something is not right. Both performers do a good job of communicating both feelings to the listener.

The singers' interpretations of the third song are probably the most different of the four being analyzed for this study. In both recordings, the notes are all there, and the dynamic and articulation markings have been observed. However, the similarities end there. Pears sings the notes as they appear on the page. He sings the notes short when they should be, and lyrically when it is indicated. However, the emotive quality is lacking. Here the communication, in my opinion, falls short.

When one listens to the Bostridge recording, however, one has the sense that a story is being told. Bostridge communicates the story with how he sings the notes. He captures the

listener's attention with the first notes. The line always moves forward; it is never static. For example, the word "Encinctured" is sung in such a way that in the pause after the word, the listener asks "What is encinctured?" and yearns to know more. Bostridge then surprises the listener when he comes to the word "leaves" by emphasizing it. He then punctuates the fact when he comes to the word "dress" also by placing emphasis on it. Pears, unfortunately does not do this. Bostridge then builds a sense of mystery when he comes to "By moonlight, in a wilderness". One can imagine Bostridge telling the story with raised eyebrows, hunched over in an effort to draw near to his listener as if he has a secret to tell. Then comes the waltz. As mentioned earlier, Bostridge interjects glottal stops before the word "and" in other places to create phrases. These phrases, in turn, help the listener to understand the story line better. Bostridge has done a wonderful job of sharing a string of thoughts in such a way that they do not sound as if the person is talking in a stream of consciousness, but in short separate thoughts. This goes back to the beginning of the piece when the poet puts thoughts together, and, upon speaking them, they become immortal. In addition, the phrases have a contour, which once again, form a landscape filled with gently rolling hills. The suspense returns when he sings "But who that beauteous Boy beguiled" and "alone, by night". Again, it is as if he is letting us in on some well-kept secret, and we lean in so that we do not miss one word. However, we are then shocked to find out in the end that the boy is unloved and abandoned.

The execution of the fourth song is similar to the third in both recordings, but the differences in interpretation are not as drastic as in the third song. The horn solos are virtually the same in both versions, but in the Bostridge recording, the horn is more prominent and takes on the role of an obbligato instrument better than in the Pears version. The mood created by the orchestra is also similar in both versions. Here, not very much happens, which gives the impression that *almost* all is at rest. Only the expressive swells of the orchestra indicate that some creatures are active at night.

As in the second and third songs, Pears does a good job of singing what is on the printed page, but the emotion, the expressiveness, again falls short. It is difficult for the listener to comprehend the message solely from the text. As I have pointed out before, the performer must mediate the composer's notated music and interpret it so that the listener can receive the message. It seems as if Pears has elected to sing the piece accurately, but not expressively.

Conversely, Bostridge, again, has taken the text and the music on the printed page and has interpreted them in such a way that the listener receives a message; something has been communicated. Bostridge is very expressive in his interpretation, such that it seems that all one has to do is to open a window or go outside and it will be possible to hear the midnight bell ringing and all the animals of the night going about doing whatever it is they do. Bostridge does an exceptionally good job of expressing the cat's mew. Here, one can even imagine Bostridge actually becoming the cat.

Through the phrasing of the vocal line, coupled with the string accompaniment, the performers have created a message that underlines my theory of a journey through the mind. It is here, in the mind that the journey begins. We are transported by the ethereal accompaniment in the first song to another world – a world inside the poet's mind. The interpretations of the second song beautifully underscore my claim that the song is a nightmare. Unfortunately, the Pears interpretations of the third and fourth songs fall somewhat flat. The Bostridge interpretations give support to my analysis, however.

As we have seen through my analysis of these two recordings, the vocalist has an important role in communicating a message to the listener. When the singer fails to do this, the communication process suffers as a result. Here, what Bruno Nettl says is more than appropriate: "One does not simply 'sing', but one sings something" (qtd. in Cook, *Beyond the Score* 227). In essence, what Nettl is saying here is that performers have a responsibility to involve themselves in the process of music making, that not all the performance decisions

should be solely left to the composer. Unfortunately, it appears as if Pears has done just that. Cook adds that

> … the complexity of WAM [western art music] has been underestimated. No one performance exhausts all the possibilities of a musical work within the WAM tradition, and to this extent the performance might be thought of as a subset of a larger universe of possibility … There are the decisions of dynamics and timbre which the performer must make but which are not specified in the score; there are nuances of timing that contribute essentially to performance interpretation and that involve deviating from the metronomically-notated specifications of the score. ("Between Process and Product", par. 11)

Considering the analysis of the two recordings chosen for this study, one can see that Bostridge, Rattle, and the obbligato instrumental soloists have made decisions about performing the music about which the score is silent. However what all the performers have done is to mediate the music in a way that a communication process is possible. Whether or not the listener receives the message depends largely upon his or her foreknowledge of a number of factors that were mentioned in Chapter 8.

It would be interesting to discover how Pears and Britten, and Bostridge and Rattle approach the rest of the cycle. With respect to Pears and Britten, we can only speculate why the recording is not as expressive (and to that end, communicative) as the Bostridge recording. Maybe the reason lies in the different recording techniques in the 21st century as opposed to the mid-20th century. Maybe the reason is that performers did not put much value on communicating the music to the listener, but rather focused simply on singing. The answers to such questions will probably never be answered, but they are worth investigating.

One must also be aware that I am not saying that my analysis of the texts, the music, and the recording is the only interpretation, but based on my analysis of the texts used, of the music as it appears on the page, and of the performances examined, I am convinced that my analysis is a sound one and one that should seriously be considered, especially if one wishes to perform the song cycle.

11. Concluding Thoughts and Observations

Summary

The goals of this study were threefold: 1) to investigate and establish the intertextual relationships between the first four poems used in Benjamin Britten's song cycle, *Nocturne*, Op. 60; 2) to investigate and establish intermedial relationships between the poetic texts and the musical score; and 3), to investigate two recordings to establish medial relationships between the composer, the texts, the performer, and the listener.

In order to accomplish the first goal, I elected to use Genette's notion of transtextuality and Porter's notion of intertextuality as it relates to the discourse community. Both of these methods were then broken down further into the categories designated by Genette (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality) and Porter (iterabilty and presupposition). The intertextual analysis revealed that each poem makes allusions to other texts that were written prior to those examined in this study. For the Shelley poem, allusions were made to classic Greek literature and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The Tennyson poem alludes to ancient Icelandic sagas. The Coleridge poem alludes to the Bible (as do the other texts) and the Dekker poem alludes to other works written by Shakespeare around the same time.

The peritext part of the paratextual analysis demonstrated that each text has a background (with the exception of the Dekker text) that influenced the author when writing them. The Shelley text was influenced by psychological interest in mental states, while Coleridge elaborated on the failed collaboration with Wordsworth. Each poem also has one or more epitexts, for example Dante's *Inferno*.

The metatextual analysis showed that none of the texts directly or indirectly influences the other texts examined, but they do reference texts that were not used in the cycle. The hypertextual analysis revealed that each text has a number of hypotexts that each author had knowledge of and may have referenced, and the architextual analysis showed that the genre that each text belongs is also influential.

I then went on to claim that *Nocturne* fits into Porter's description of a discourse community in that the writer (here Britten) is part of a team and inherently part of a community of discourse (composers) that creates its own collective history and traditions (music). Upon conducting the iterable analysis, I examined the structure of each poem to determine how it fit into the *Nocturne* discourse community. I examined the structure, language, and thematic material of each poem, as well as the titles, poetic voice, and setting. This analysis revealed that there are many more similarities among the poems than there are differences. For example, the poems have similar language, which is mostly what we would consider modern English, each uses a rhyme scheme, common themes are night and dreams, and three of the poems are excerpts from larger works.

My analysis then led me to the presupposition that although the poems have little to do with each other if looked at individually, when put together into a collection, as Britten has done with this song cycle, then the result is an exploration of different states the mind experiences during sleep: serenity, fear, anxiety, and confusion. Thus, my conclusion was that the collection resulted in a new way to perceive the poetry.

After having completed my intertextual analysis, I conducted a musical analysis to determine what compositional techniques Britten used to interpret the poetry. I was able to determine that the primary technique used was text painting. Britten's use of harmonic structure, vocal lyricism, instrumental obbligato, and ritornello and ostinato figures create pictures that reflect the mood and thematic material of each poem. In addition, the musical

analysis confirmed my presupposition conducted in the textual analysis: that *Nocturne* is a journey though different dream / mental states.

Following the musical analysis were intermedial analyses based on the notions of plurimediality and transmediality put forth by Werner Wolf. The plurimediality analysis was further broken into intermedial combination and intermedial fusion. From the analysis focusing on intermedial combination, I was able to determine just how Britten may have gone about interpreting each poem. To do this, I examined aural and rhythmic imitation, and interpretation in each song, and also looked at specific compositional techniques he used to create unity and coherence among the songs. I also considered aspects Britten's personal life and how these aspects may have affected his compositional style with regard to the song cycle. Armed with this information, I went on to do an analysis using intermedial fusion. The result of the second part of this analysis was that the combination of poetry and music created a new, unique song cycle: through-composed and exploring different nocturnal states.

The last intermedial analysis conducted used the notion of transmediality: examining elements that are not specific to any one medium, but that can exist in more than one medium simultaneously. The elements I identified are themes dealing with the supernatural, nature, and emotionalism. However, I came to the conclusion that the transmedial component of *Nocturne* is not very significant.

The third goal of my study was to examine two recordings of *Nocturne*, one with Peter Pears as the vocal soloist and Benjamin Britten conducting, and the other with Ian Bostridge as the vocal soloist and Sir Simon Rattle conducting. I analyzed both recordings to determine how each singer, conductor, and solo instrumentalists addressed the musical notation. I then compared the two recordings, and lastly, stated my opinion as to the effectiveness of each recording's communicative abilities. My evaluation of the recordings revealed that they both are worthy representations of the song cycle, in that they are sensitive to notation and the performance suggestions dictated by the score. However, I was very surprised to discover that

the Bostridge recording was superior concerning interpretation. Bostridge and company do a good job of mediating the notes on the page and transforming them into a musical message. Pears and company, unfortunately, seem to just perform the notes (of course there is nothing wrong with this approach, but doing so, in my opinion, impedes the communication process). Bostridge has the uncanny ability to dig into the score and find the things that are not stated and communicate not only the text to the listener, but also emotion, excitement, intensity, and suspense.

I perhaps had my biases when I began the analyses in that I assumed the Pears / Britten recording would be the superior recording and would be the standard which other recordings would have to meet. That, unfortunately, was not the case. When trying to find an explanation for the differences in expectation, I surmised that my discovery may have had something to do with the different recording methods used in the 1960s as opposed to those used today. However, without further research, no conclusive results can be determined.

Conclusions

What I have shown in this study is how Britten's *Nocturne* can be considered as an intertextual, an intermedial, and a medial work. However, there is still much that can be done in these areas considering this piece of music. While I have answered several questions, there are many that still remain to be answered. The most obvious of these are: how do these three notions apply to the rest of the cycle? As mentioned at the beginning of this study, *Nocturne* is an important transitional work in Britten's repertoire that has been largely neglected by musicologists, theorists (both music and literary), and psychologists. It is my hope that this study will add to the few other scholarly works on this piece of music and thus expand the corpus of knowledge concerning Britten's oeuvre.

Another area that is worthy of more research is my notion that the song cycle is a journey through the mind or dream state. I have given several indications that the poems used in the cycle have ties to the psychological realm in a number of ways. Unfortunately, the scope of this study did not allow for an in-depth examination of this topic. As a result, I have just skimmed the surface, but I am certain that this notion could be the subject of a self-contained study.

One area that urgently needs to be explored more is why the Pears / Britten recording is not as successful as other recordings in mediating and communicating a message to the listener. In order to tackle this area, one would have to do some research into recording techniques of the 1960s, and look at expectations of recording practices as far as the performer is concerned. This would require examining several recordings made at that time by different performers, comparing them to each other, and then comparing them to recordings made toward the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. Until reliable data is available, it will be difficult to fairly compare recordings that are so technically different and decades apart.

While there are a number of studies which deal with the medial performer, I have found very few that deal with the art song singer as a performance medium. It is largely assumed that the art song singer mediates similarly to an opera singer. While there is some merit to this thinking, one has to acquiesce to the fact that there are some fundamental differences between the two genres. For example, the art song singer does not have to worry about staging, costumes, or interacting with other singers (in most cases). Do art song singers mediate the same way that opera singers do, or do they do something differently?

Finally, an interesting subject area to consider is audience perception of different performances of *Nocturne*, either as the sole subject of such a study, or with other song cycles by Britten or by other composers.

As one can see, the possibilities are great. I have just tapped into one area in dealing with intertextuality, intermediality, and mediality. It is my hope that others will take up the call and continue to discuss and discover new elements of this wonderful piece of music.

12. Appendix

"On a Poet's Lips I Slept" also sometimes referred to as "The Poet's Dream" (Act I, lines 738 - 750 from *Prometheus Unbound* by Percy Bysshe Shelley)

Fourth Spirit

On a poet's lips I slept

Dreaming like a love-adept

In the sound his breathing kept;

Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,

But feeds on the aëreal kisses

Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.

He will watch from dawn till gloom

The lake-reflected sun illume

The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,

Nor heed nor see, what things they be:

But from these create he can

Forms more real than living man,

Nurslings of immortality!

[One of these awakened me,

And I sped to succour thee.]

“The Kraken” by Lord Alfred Tennyson

Below the thunders of the upper deep;

Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,

His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep

The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee

About his shadowy sides: above him swell

Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;

And far away into the sickly light,

From many a wondrous grot and secret cell

Unnumber’d and enormous polypi

Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie

Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;

Then once by men and angels to be seen,

In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

"Encinctured with a Twine of Leaves" (Fragment from *The Wanderings of Cain* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,
That leafy twine his only dress!
A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,
By moonlight in a wilderness.
The moon was bright, the air was free,
And fruits and flowers together grew
On many a shrub and many a tree:
And all put on a gentle hue,
Hanging in the shadowy air
Like a picture rich and rare.
It was a climate where, they say,
The night is more beloved than day.
But who that beauteous Boy beguiled,
That beauteous Boy to linger here?
Alone, by night, a little child,
In place so silent and so wild –
Has he no friend, no loving mother near?

“Midnight’s Bell goes Ting, Ting, Ting” (from *Blurt, Master Constable* by Thomas Dekker)

Midnight’s bell goes ting, ting, ting, ting, ting,
Then dogs do howl, and not a bird does sing,
But the nightingale, and she cries twit, twit, twit;
Owls then on every bough do sit;
Ravens croak on chimney’s tops;
The cricket in the chamber hops;
The nibbling mouse is not asleep,
But he goes peep, peep, peep, peep, peep;
And the cats cry mew! mew! mew!
And still the cats cry mew! mew! mew!

Act IV, Scene ii. Lazarillo's room in Imperia's house. From *Blurt, Master Constable* by Thomas Dekker

Music suddenly plays, and birds sing. Enter Lazarillo bareheaded, in his shirt, a pair of pantaples on, a rapier in his hand and a tobacco pipe; he seems amazed, and walks so up and down.

LAZARILLO

Saint Jacques and the seven deadly sins – that is the Seven Wise Masters of the world – pardon me for this night! I will kill the devil.

WITHIN

Ha ha ha!

LAZARILLO

Thou prince of blackamoors, thou shalt have small cause to laugh if I run thee through. This

chamber is haunted; would I had not been brought a bed in it, or else were well-delivered, for my heart tells me ’tis no good luck to have anything to do with the devil, he’s a paltry merchant!

A song within.

Midnight's bell goes ting, ting, ting, ting, ting;

Then dogs do howl, and not a bird does sing

But the nightingale, and she cries twit, twit, twit, twit.

Owls then on every bough do sit,

Ravens croak on chimney tops,

The cricket in the chamber hops,

And the cats cry mew, mew, mew;

The nibbling mouse is not asleep,

But he goes peep, peep, peep, peep, peep;

And the cats [cry] mew, mew, mew,

And still the cats [cry] mew, mew, mew.

LAZARILLO

I shall be mou’d by puss-cats, but I had rather die a dog’s death; they have nine lives apiece — like a woman – and they will make it up ten lives if they and I fall a-scratching. Bright Helena of this house, would thy Troy were a-fire, for I am a-cold; or else would I had the Greeks’ wooden curtal to ride away! Most ambrosian-lipp’d creature, come away quickly, for this night’s lodging lies cold at my heart.

The Spanish pavin.

The Spanish pavin! I thought the devil could not understand Spanish, but since thou art my countryman, O thou tawny [Satan], I will dance after thy pipe.

He dances the Spanish pavin.

Ho, sweet devil, ho! Thou wilt make any man weary of thee, tho' he deal with thee in his shirt.

Sweet beauty, she'll not come. I'll fall to sleep,

And dream of her; love-dreams are ne'er too deep.

Falls down [through a trapdoor. Enter] Frisco above, laughing.

FRISCO

Ha, ha, ha!

LAZARILLO

Ho, ho, Frisco! Madonna! I am in hell, but here is not fire; hellfire is all put out. What ho? so, ho, ho? I shall be drown'd. I beseech thee, dear Frisco, raise Blurt the constable, or some scavenger, to come and make clean these kennels of hell, for they stink so, that I shall cast away my precious self.

[Enter Imperia.]

IMPERIA

Is he down, Frisco?

FRISCO

He's down; he cries out he's in hell. It's heaven to me to have him cry so.

IMPERIA

Fie, fie, fie; let him lie, and get all to bed.

Exit.

FRISCO

Not all; I have fatting knavery in hand.

He cries he's damn'd in hell; the next shall cry

He's climbing up to heaven, and here's the gin:

One woodcock's ta'en; I'll have his brother in.

Exit.

“Sonnet 102” by William Shakespeare

My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear;
That love is merchandized, whose rich esteeming,
The owner’s tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer’s front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore like her, I sometime hold my tongue:
Because I would not dull you with my song.

“When the Nightingale Sings” by Anonymous

When the nightingale sings,
And the woods wax green:
I expect, the leaves and the blades of grass,
And blossoms to spring up, in April;
And so love has shot through my heart
With a spear so honed

That night and day it drinks my blood

And my heart grieves.

All this year I have loved

The one I can love no more;

I have sighed so many sighs,

Sweetheart, for your favour.

Love will never be any closer to me,

And I rue that intensely.

Sweetheart, think about me:

I have loved you such a long time.

Dear sweetheart, I beg you,

For one word of love.

As long as I live I will not seek

Another throughout the entire world.

With your affection, my sweet love,

You could bring me joy:

A sweet kiss from you lips

Could cure me completely

Sweetheart, I beg you,

With a lover's petition,

If you love me, as they say you do,

Then love me as I want you to.

And if it be your will,

Then be sure you make it happen,

For I think of you so much,

That I'm growing like the spring.

“The Youth with the Red-Gold Hair” by Dame Edith Sitwell

The gold-armoured ghost from the Roman road

Sighed over the wheat,

‘Fear not the sound and the glamour

of my gold armour –

(The sound of the wind and the wheat)

Fear not its clamour…

Fear only the red-gold sun with the fleece of a fox

Who will steal the fluttering bird you hide in your breast.

Fear only the red-gold rain

That will dim your brightness, O my tall tower of the corn,

You my blonde girl…,

But the wind sighed, ‘Rest’,

The wind in his grey, knight’s armour,

The wind in his grey, night armour,

Sighed over the fields of the wheat, ‘He is gone… Forlorn.’

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